

Speaker: Simon Sherwin

Date: 22nd April 2012

Reading: Numbers 21:4-9, John 3:14-18

The story from history of the desert journey of the children of Israel. It is towards the end of the journey and they are near the place the Lord would bring them to. It was a journey marked by moaning, mumbling and the judgment of God. The way had not been easy, they had been brought circumstances and they complain. They blame God for their circumstances, they doubted His goodness and despised His provision. God had fed them faithfully for 41 years but they complain about it.

People still say, where's God? Why am I going on the pathway I am?

Our pathway is a consequence of sin and our choices. We can't shift responsibility and blame God for what we have done wrong. God permits things that He can speak through them. God would have His people to trust Him.

God asks you to give Him your heart. If He is speaking to you don't ignore Him.

There is so much of life we take for granted but all comes from the hand of God. "[God giveth to all life, breath, and all things](#)" (Acts 17:25). All come from the hand of god in His goodness.

We may go through life with no thought and then when things go wrong turn in bitterness. His mercies are renewed every morning, His faithfulness is great (Lam 3:21-23).

Are we prepared to acknowledge all is brought to us from the hand of God.

The children of Israel were God's people and should have known better. God has to come in in judgment.

He is still the same God today and will still step in.

God stepped in longing to bring the people back to Himself. God loves you and wants you to come back to Him.

In this story, God brings before us a wonderful picture of the way of salvation.

The fiery serpents are a picture of sin and its consequences.

At the root sin is selfishness and self centredness. The Bible says "[Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself](#)" (Matt 22:37-39). This is thinking of others first.

We can also be easily marked by pride and self indulgence. Self promotion is encouraged but when we are self centred problems occur.

Sin is a poison that works in all and is deadly. 100% or 10/10 of people die.

It was a dangerous problem. We are in danger of perishing. In our sin that is what we are doing, we are in danger of spending eternity separated from God.

There is an urgency about salvation and the question of sin. “[Now is the accepted time now is the day of salvation](#)” (2 Cor 6:2).

The people come to the point where they acknowledge “[we have sinned](#)”. Even if things seem bad you are still a sinner. The Bible tells us “[All have sinned and come short of the glory of God](#)” (Rom 3:23).

A great step when we realise that as far God is concerned we are in the wrong.

They also acknowledge the answer “[pray to Lord](#)”. There is nothing we can do about sin but we must turn to God “[Salvation belongs to the Lord](#)” (Psa 3:8).

The provision of God went far beyond what they asked. They wanted the serpents removed so no more could be bitten.

The sooner we realise we can do nothing for our sin and cast ourselves on God the better.

God had a concern for those who had been bitten as well as those who hadn't.

If salvation was only a freedom from sin's penalty that would be great but it is more than that. God will blot them out” (Isa 44:22) a freedom from guilt.

It also brings freedom from sin's power. When we trust Christ for salvation the power of sin is broken.

Salvation is about bringing us into fellowship with God “[There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother](#)” (Prov 18:24)

In the goodness of God he gives us “[an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away](#)” (1 Pet. 1:4).

God goes so far beyond what they and we could dare to ask for.

Salvation is centred in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. “[For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life](#)” (John 3:16) The Son of man was lifted up on a cross and there bore the punishment for our sins.

We would never have thought of such a message but God did. It cost Him everything, it cost Him His Son.

Why did He do it? There was no other way. The one whom we offended has taken our sin. “[Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree](#)” (1 Pet 2:24)

God's promise was that everyone who looked would live.

Some would have thought it was really silly. “[For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God](#)” (1 Cor 1:18)

He died, was buried and rose again living in power of endless life.

“[He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see](#)

life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36)

If you don't come by the way of the cross you won't come at all.

Some would have just taken their chances. How many do that today? If that's your attitude you will perish.

You can't take your chances. It's either God's way or no way.

Some may have said they believed but done nothing about it. “Believe on the Lord Jesus” not just believing about Him, need to do something about it. Faith is doing something about it.

Blondin Illustration – Cooked egg over falls, wheelbarrow. Had seen it but would not trust him.

Maybe you appreciate Christ as Saviour in your head but real salvation is putting your life in His hand.

Nothing to do to save self. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can save.

When they looked at the serpent it was more than just a casual glance. It is not just a head belief but means letting go of self and trusting in the Lord and His ability.

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake” (2 Cor 4:5)

Is He your Lord?

Salvation is freely offered from a loving God.

Will you receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour?

Why delay?

It is the most wonderful thing that can ever happen to you.