



Steädfast / Sumud

FOR JUSTICE IN PALESTINE & ISRAEL

Presented by the Just Love Ministry

Week 4: A HEALING COVENANT

Meditate **NUMBERS 21**

⁴From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Explore



"The Thirteenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (2023) has called on member churches "to examine, discuss, discern and respond to the implications of the recent reports by international human rights organizations, which describe the discrimination against Palestinians living under occupation or as citizens of Israel, as overt and systemic, and find that the occupation continues to ignore the equal human dignity and human rights of Palestinians living under this system of control." (2022-2023 Peace Not Walls Review Summary and Recommendations, p. 15) In fact..."The Church leaders in Jerusalem have been appealing to their sister churches and to the international community for solidarity and support. There is a growing fear that the already diminished Christian presence could disappear altogether from the Holy Land.

The LWF Assembly stands in solidarity with its Member Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and affirms its ministry and witness in these challenging times. Further, the LWF Assembly expresses solidarity with other Christians, people of other faiths and Palestinians who are affected by the escalation of violence, occupation, and lack of access to holy sites. The LWF realizes that there are churches that are complicit in the injustice that the Palestinians and Palestinian Christians suffer, through colonial theologies of superiority and power." (Public Statement on Christian Presence and Life in the Holy Land)

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Reflect

The Israelites got “impatient on the way.” Sometimes we want quick results and are tempted to shortcut the process, the journey through the wilderness. But in this “in-between” place (they have left Egypt but are not yet in the Promised Land) they experienced the pressure of anxiety which they did not know how to handle. The Israelites spoke against the Lord out of fear for their life. And so, they sinned. God’s solution was for Moses to make and elevate a bronze serpent for the Israelites to look at and be saved. Whenever sin “bites” we won’t run away or deny it or justify ourselves. We face it. We look at its consequences. We look at it with contrition. We consider how our sin is death-dealing. We engage in habit-transforming conversations and actions.

1. How intentional have we been with seeking to understand the issues at the bottom of the recent conflict in Gaza?
2. How has the Church responded to the call to “examine, discuss, discern and respond” to the violation of human rights in Palestine and the escalation of war?
3. Where and how have we showed solidarity with the suffering of the people of Palestine and Israel?

Pray

*God of the nations, we ask for forgiveness for our lack of patience and the unwillingness to do the hard work of talking with those we disagree with. Grant us the grace to lift our eyes and look at the ones we have dehumanized. Many suffer because of our lazy indifference to their human rights and our carelessness to their needs of a safe land, shelter, and a prosperous future. Bless us with eyes that see and hearts that care. **Amen.***

Sing

ELW 321 Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church
ELW 759 My Faith Looks Up to Thee
ELW 758 You Are the Way