

Wilderness Wanderings - 1

Numbers 16-21

▶ **Numbers 16-17**

- ▶ The timing of this event is uncertain – likely, either early in their 38 years of punishment, or toward the end. Both views have merit.
- ▶ Korah, with 250 leaders – men of renown (incl. Levites – **vs. 7**), challenged the authority of Moses & Aaron (again)
- ▶ Moses and Aaron fell on their face and noted that YHWH would show them who to accept.

▶ **Numbers 16-17**

- ▶ They are told to each take a censer and incense, put fire in them and let YHWH decide.
- ▶ Dathan and Abiram, named leaders, refuse to comply even with the challenge.
- ▶ Moses is angry and prays that YHWH reject their offerings (**16:15**)

The rebellion of Korah

▶ **Numbers 16-17**

- ▶ The LORD called for Moses to separate himself from the congregation (again). Moses again intercedes for Israel (**vs. 22**).
- ▶ Korah, Dathan and Abiram and their families are swallowed up by the earth and then closed over them.
Also fire from YHWH consumed the 250 men who rebelled.
- ▶ The censers were then gathered and made into a covering for the altar (because they were holy).

▶ **Numbers 16-17**

- ▶ **16:41-50** - the next day the people complain against Moses & Aaron saying they had killed “the people of the LORD”.

Again, YHWH tells Moses to get away from them so that He could consume the people!

Aaron is told to take a censer and offer atonement for the people on the altar.

The plague was stopped, but 14,700 died.

▶ **Numbers 16-17**

▶ **17:1-13** – Aaron's rod buds.

To further establish that YHWH had chosen Aaron, each tribe was to bring a rod (staff) and present it to Him.

They were placed in the tabernacle before “the Testimony” (the Ark of the Covenant).

▶ The next day, Aaron's rod had sprouted buds, produced blossoms and ripe almonds. The rod was placed with the Ark (**cf. Hebrews 9:4**)

Moses' Error at Kadesh

▶ **Numbers 20**

- ▶ **20:1** – The Children of Israel arrive at the wilderness of Zin “in the first month” (Likely 40th year) (**cf. Num. 20:28-29, 33:36-38, Deut. 2:7, 14, etc.**)
- ▶ Miriam dies and is buried in Kadesh.
- ▶ Again, the people complain to Moses & Aaron because they have no water.
- ▶ YHWH tells Moses & Aaron to take his rod and speak to the rock and water would come forth.

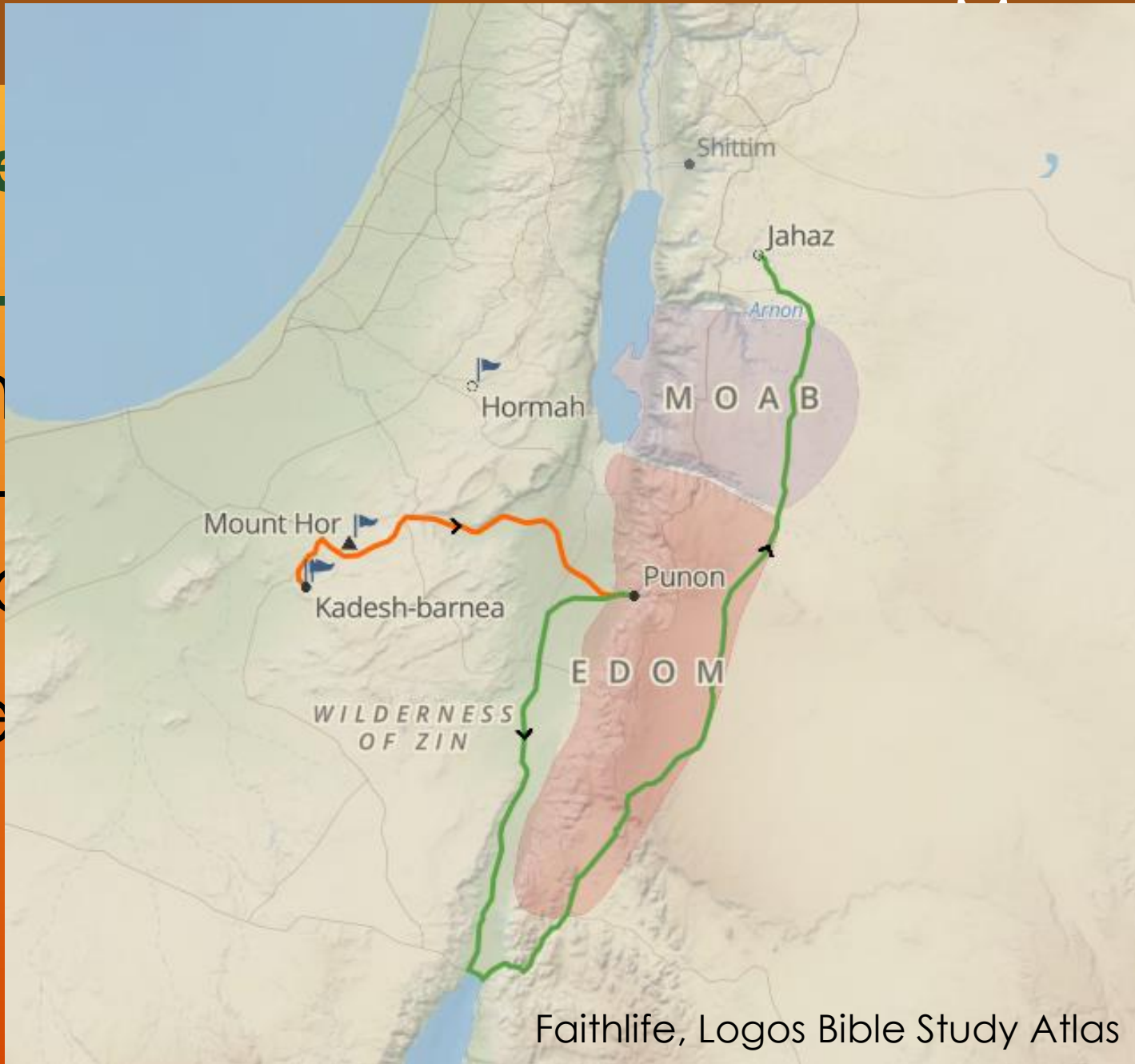
▶ **Numbers 20**

- ▶ **20:9-10** – Moses and Aaron speak to the people, “must WE bring water for you out of this rock?” He then struck the rock twice and water gushed out.
- ▶ **20:12-13**, Because they refused to hallow God, they were told they would not enter the promised land.
- ▶ Called the water of Meribah (Contention)

▶ **Numbers 20**

- ▶ Did Moses deserve that harsh punishment?
Consider – not only did he disobey HOW to bring forth water, but he failed to give God the glory.
- ▶ NOTE: This was not about his salvation (he repented), but consequences for his actions. **Matthew 17:3-4, Jude 9 (Cf. Deut. 34:6)** we know that he died saved.

- ▶ **Numbers**
- ▶ **20:14-**
through
Recall -
The land
- ▶ So Israe



passage

of Esau.
(t. 2:4-5)

- ▶ **Numbers 20:14-21:35**
- ▶ **20:22-29** – Aaron dies. Eleazar takes his place. There is mourning for 30 days. He was 123 years old (**Num. 33:38, cf. Ex. 7:7**)
- ▶ **21:1-3** - Battle at Hormah – a king from Canaan attacks Israel and takes some prisoners. Israel vows that if delivered they would destroy their cities. Israel defeats them (this time – **cf. Num. 14:45**).

- ▶ **Numbers 20:14-21:35**
- ▶ **21:4-9** – The people AGAIN complain (see **vs. 5**).
- ▶ Fiery serpents are sent through the camp and many die. The people turn to Moses and confess their sins. They ask him to pray for them.
- ▶ YHWH instructs Moses to “make a fiery serpent” and set it on a pole. When one was bitten, if they looked at it, they would live. It worked.
- ▶ **Cf. 2 Kings 18:4** – the people would make an idol out of that bronze serpent (Hezekiah would destroy it ~700 years later).

- ▶ **Numbers 20:14-21:35**
- ▶ **21:10-20** – their wanderings during this final year documented. They end up at Mt. Pisgah (this is where the LORD will soon show Moses all the promised land before he dies – **Deut. 34:1**)

- ▶ **Numbers 20:14-21:35**
- ▶ **21:21-35** – Sihon and Og are defeated. Some of Israel begins to occupy their cities and land (east of the Jordan). This will become the territories of the tribes of Reuben, Gad & half of Manasseh.
- ▶ Israel begins to be victorious in battles, which would put Canaan on notice, AND strengthen the faith of Israel as they prepare to subdue Canaan.

Lessons from Israel's Wilderness Wanderings

- ▶ **Be careful before you challenge God's leaders**
- ▶ It is one thing to question error or expose corruption in a leader.
- ▶ But, when men are standing true to God's word, we must honor them. Especially when they are dealing with difficult and unpleasant tasks.
- ▶ **Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Timothy 5:19-20**

Lessons from Israel's Wilderness Wanderings

- ▶ **We need to follow God's instructions exactly.**
- ▶ Consider the consequences of Moses' actions. All the good he had done, he was still wrong and there were still consequences.
- ▶ **Cf. James 2:10,
1 Corinthians 4:6, 2 John 9**

Lessons from Israel's Wilderness Wanderings

- ▶ **Even though we are forgiven of our sins, there may still be consequences.**
- ▶ Moses, God servant, while forgiven, still paid a price for his one act of rebellion
- ▶ **We cannot let frustration lead us to sin.**
Excuses do not change God's laws
**Psalm 106:32-33, Ephesians 4:26,
James 1:19-20**

Lessons from Israel's Wilderness Wanderings

- ▶ **Lessons from the bronze serpent**
- ▶ It is a type of Christ – **John 3:14-16**
- ▶ It demonstrates the need for faith to be forgiven. Salvation involves – grace, faith & obedience (works)
- ▶ Do not make idols out of icons. We do not need jewelry, t-shirts, bumper stickers, statues or crosses in building, etc. to manifest our faith (**e.g., Ex. 20:4-5**). Our faith is manifested by who we are – **cf. Matthew 23:5-6, 1 Peter 3:3-7.**
Know WHY you are wearing what you wear?

Spiritually we are in the midst of
our “wilderness wandering”
(**cf. 1 Peter 2:11**)

Are you preparing to
enter His Promised Land?

Let us pray!

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