

4. The Wilderness Wanderings Pt. II

Journey to the Promised Land

Introduction

I. Events while Encamped at Mt. Sinai (Numb. 1:1-10:10)

The Setting Described:

Num. 1:1 “Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt”

A. The Tabernacle is Finished and Consecrated (Numb. 7:1-8:26)

The time of completion:

Ex. 40:17 “Now it came about in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was erected.”

1. The Leaders of Israel make offerings to the Lord to dedicate and sanctify the Tabernacle and its furnishings

B. The Second Passover is Observed (9:1-14)

1. Observed on the 14th day of the 1st month of the 2nd year after coming out of Egypt (Numb. 9:3)

C. A Census of Israel is taken (1:1-6:27)

1. Conducted on the 1st day of the 2nd month of the 2nd year (Numb. 1:1)
 - Number the males over 20 years of age (except the Levites)
 - The total was 603,550 (cf. Numb. 1:46; Ex. 38:26)
 - The total number of Levites (1 month and above) was 22,000 (Numb. 3:39)
 - The 12 tribes are assigned their camping and marching place around the Tabernacle

II. The Road from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh Barnea (10:11-12:16)

A. The Israelites Resume their Journey to the Promised land

1. The Departure from Mt. Sinai (10:11-36)

NB: An important point must be made regarding what God is accomplishing along the way to the Promised Land: The Nation was being led by God himself.

- Ex. 40:34-38
- Numb. 9:15-23

15 Now on the day that the tabernacle was erected the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle, until morning. 16 So it was continuously; the cloud would cover it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. 17 And whenever the cloud was lifted from over the tent, afterward the sons of Israel would then set out; and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the sons of Israel would camp. 18 At the command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped. 19 Even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep the LORD's charge and not set out. 20 If sometimes the cloud remained a few days over the tabernacle, according to the command of the LORD they remained camped. Then according to the command of the LORD they set out. 21 If sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was lifted in the morning, they would move out; or if it remained in the daytime and at night, whenever the cloud was lifted, they would set out. 22 Whether it was two days or a month or a year that the cloud lingered over the tabernacle, staying above it, the sons of Israel remained camped and did not set out; but when it was lifted, they did set out. 23 At the command of the LORD they camped, and at the command of the LORD they set out; they kept the LORD's charge, according to the command of the LORD through Moses.

2. The People continue to grumble along the way (Numb. 11)

Num. 11:1 Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the LORD; and when the LORD heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. 2 The people therefore cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD, and the fire died out. 3 So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the LORD burned among them.

Num. 11:4 And the rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat? 5 "We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, 6 but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."

3. The Lord commands Moses to appoint additional leadership

- Moses appoints 70 Elders

Numb. 11:17 "Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you shall not bear it all alone.

4. Aaron and Miriam challenge Moses' leadership (Numb. 12)

- They challenge Moses because of the Cushite woman he married and because of the unique prophetic role he served
- God's response:

12:5-8 Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent, and He called Aaron and Miriam. When they had both come forward, 6 He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. 7 "Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household; 8 With him I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings, And he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant, against Moses?"

III. Events While at Kadesh Barnea (13:1-20:13)

A. The Failure of faith at Kadesh Barnea (13:1-14:45)

- The Nation arrives at Kadesh Barnea in "the Wilderness of Paran" (12:16)
- The people request (Deut 1:22-23) and the Lord commands (Numb.13:1-15) that Moses send out spies to survey the Land for the coming conquest

NB: What if the nation had not requested that spies be sent out???

- 12 Spies are sent out

Num. 13:17 When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, "Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country. 18 "And see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. 19 "And how is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications? 20 "And how is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes.

- 10 spies return with a bad report:

27 Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 "Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 "Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan. . . ." 32 So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. 33 "There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

- 2 spies return with a good report:

Num. 13:30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it."

- The bulk of the Nation believes the 10 worthless spies

Num. 14:1 Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! 3

“And why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” 4 So they said to one another, “Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt.”

- **Joshua and Caleb urge the People to trust the Lord**

Num. 14:6 And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, “The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 “If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us — a land which flows with milk and honey. 9 “Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.”

- **The nation turns on Josua and Caleb**

10 But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.

- **The Lord decrees that He will kill off the nation and start over, but Moses intercedes**

Num. 14:13-19 But Moses said to the LORD, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for by Thy strength Thou didst bring up this people from their midst, 14 and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of this people, for Thou, O LORD, art seen eye to eye, while Thy cloud stands over them; and Thou dost go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 “Now if Thou dost slay this people as one man, then the nations who have heard of Thy fame will say, 16 ‘Because the LORD could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore He slaughtered them in the wilderness.’ 17 “But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as Thou hast declared, 18 ‘The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations.’ 19 “Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Thy lovingkindness, just as Thou also hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.”

- **God relents and judges the faithless people.**

32 ‘But as for you, your corpses shall fall in this wilderness. 33 ‘And your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they shall suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness. 34 ‘According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you shall know My opposition. 35 ‘I, the LORD, have spoken, surely this I will do to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be destroyed, and there they shall die.’”

- **The Nation is frightened by the decree of judgment by God and change their minds—insisting that they are ready to enter the Promised land**

Num. 14:39 And when Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people mourned greatly. 40 In the morning, however, they rose up early and went up to the ridge of the hill country, saying, “Here we are; we have indeed sinned, but we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised.” 41 But Moses said, “Why then are you transgressing the commandment of the LORD, when it will not succeed? 42 “Do not go up, lest you be struck down before your enemies, for the LORD is not among you. 43 “For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there in front of you, and you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned back from following the LORD. And the LORD will not be with you.” 44 But they went up heedlessly to the ridge of the hill country; neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses left the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down, and struck them and beat them down as far as Hormah.

IV. The Road from Kadesh Barnea to the Plains of Moab (20:14-22:1)

A. The Nation departs Kadesh Barnea and moves toward the Promised land

1. The Israelites seek passage through the Land of Edom but are forced to go around their land (Numb. 20:14-21)
2. The Israelites fight against the King of Arad and God grants them success

NB: Here is another item that God is accomplishing in the hearts of the people as He leads them on to the Promised Land and prepares them for the many battles that lie ahead. Initially, the King of Arad takes some of the Israelites prisoner. This prompts Israel to vow obedience in destroying the inhabitants of the land if God would grant them victory.

3. The Lord sends a plague of serpents upon the people (Numb. 21:4-9)

NB: The opposition of Edom forces the Nation to take a far southern route towards the Promised land. This causes dissention among the people and God judges them with a plague of serpents. God provides a Bronze Serpent to “save” the people. (cf John 3:14-15)

4. The Nation defeats King Sihon of the Amorites (Numb. 21:21-32)
5. The Nation defeats King Og of the region of Bashan (Numb. 21:33-35)