



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

Old Testament Survey

Lesson 12 – From Kadesh Barnea to the Banks of the Jordan River (Numbers 15-36)

God's Repeated Judgments on Israel's Unbelief

From the time when God's gave of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai until when the children of Israel reached the Jordan River, we can list twelve distinct acts of unbelief and disobedience:

1. the golden calf (Exodus 32)
2. the profane fire of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-5)
3. the blasphemy against the LORD's name (Leviticus 24:10-16)
4. the complaining at Kibroth hattaavah (Numbers 11)
5. the envy of Miriam and Aaron (Numbers 12)
6. the great rebellion at Kadesh Barnea after the report of the spies (Numbers 13-14)
7. the picking of sticks on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36)
8. the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16:1-40)
9. the continued rebellion on the next day (Numbers 16:40-50)
10. the unbelief of Moses and Aaron at Meribah (Numbers 20:1-13)
11. the fiery snakes near the land of Edom (Numbers 21:4-9)
12. adultery and idolatry with the Moabites (Numbers 25)

God's Repeated Promises of Grace and the Beginning of Their Fulfillment

God kept His promises and saved His people despite their sins. These promises were even repeated and expanded by a heathen sorcerer, Balaam, whom King Balak of Moab had hired to curse Israel.

Israel's final victory over the Canaanites was assured by preliminary victories over Sihon, king of Heshbon, over Og, king of Bashan, and over the Midianites. Israel was forbidden to fight against Edom, Moab, and Ammon, however.

Before the crossing of the Jordan River into Canaan, 2½ tribes already received their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan: Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

Read Numbers 15-36 along with the notes below. If you have any questions, ask them.

Numbers 15 – Various Laws Concerning Sacrifices

A man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was stoned to death (vv. 32-36).

Numbers 16 – The Three Days of Great Rebellion (Korah, Dathan, Abiram)

The first day: Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and 250 leaders rebel against Moses (vv. 1-4).

Moses tells Korah and the 250 to bring incense before the LORD (vv. 5-11, 16-17).

“The man whom the LORD chooses is the holy one” (v. __)

“You and all your company are gathered together against the LORD” (v. __)

Moses tries to speak with Dathan and Abiram (Reubenites) (vv. 12-15).

The second day: Korah and his crowd are swallowed by an earthquake (vv. 19-34).

The 250 who brought incense before the Lord are consumed by fire (vv. 18, 35-40).

The third day: The people accuse Moses and Aaron killing the rebels (vv. 41-45).

Aaron's atonement prevents God's plague from spreading further (vv. 46-50).

Note: 14 700 were killed, besides those killed by the earthquake and fire.

Numbers 17 – *Aaron is God's Choice; His Rod Grows Almonds*

Numbers 18-19 – *The Tithe for the Levites and the Law of the Red Heifer*

Numbers 20 – *The Unbelief of Moses and Aaron, and Aaron's Death*

The Israelites complain again in Kadesh Barnea (vv. 1-6).

"If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!" (v. __)

Moses and Aaron, in unbelief and discouragement, fail to sanctify God as they get water from a rock; God then judges them (vv. 7-13).

"You shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them" (v. ____)

The Edomites refuse permission to let the Israelites go through their land (vv. 14-21).

Aaron dies at Mt. Hor and the priesthood passes to Eleazar, his son (vv. 22-29).

Numbers 21 – *From Mount Hor to the Banks of the Jordan*

King Arad takes Israelites as prisoners; Israel vows to return and destroy (vv. 1-3).

God sends fiery snakes as a judgment and the bronze serpent for deliverance (vv. 4-9).

Note: the bronze serpent on the pole is a picture of **JESUS CHRIST** on the cross (John 3:15-16).

"Everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live" (v. __)

Israel goes around Edom and Moab to the Arnon River (vv. 10-20).

God gives Israel victory over Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan (vv. 21-35).

Numbers 22-24 – *God Uses the Heathen Sorcerer Balaam to Bless Israel*

King Balak of Moab hires Balaam to curse Israel (22:1-20).

God's angel warns Balaam on the way to speak God's Word only (22:21-35).

Note: God uses a donkey to instruct Balaam on his journey (2 Peter 2:15-16).

The first effort: Balaam blesses Israel (22:36 – 23:12).

The second effort: Balaam blesses Israel (23:13-26).

The third effort: Balaam blesses Israel (23:27 – 24:13).

Balaam gives one last prophecy of Israel's glorious future (24:14-25).

"A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel" (v. ____)

Perhaps this is why the Magi believed that the star meant the birth of Israel's King.

Numbers 25 – *Israel's Adultery with the Moabites and God's Judgment*

Israel commits adultery and idolatry with the Moabites (vv. 1-3).

Priest Phinehas ends the LORD's plague by killing two open adulterers (vv. 4-18).

Note: 24,000 Israelites were killed in this plague.

Numbers 26 – *The New Census Totals 601,730 Fighting Men*

"So there was not left a man of them, except Caleb...and Joshua" (v. ____)

Numbers 27 – *Joshua Is Appointed Moses' Successor*

God to Moses: **"When you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people"** (v. ____)

Numbers 28-30 – Various Laws Concerning Sacrifices, Feasts, and Vows

Numbers 31 – God Gives Israel Victory over the Midianites

Note that Balaam is mentioned in verses 8 and 16 of this chapter.

Numbers 32 – The 2½ Eastern Tribes Agree to Help Their Brothers before Settling Down

The promise of Gad, Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh: **“We will not return to our homes until every one of the children of Israel has received his inheritance”** (v. ____)

Numbers 33 – The List of Campsites and God’s Instructions about the Promised Land

“You shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you” (v. ____)

“Those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides” (v. ____)

Numbers 34 – The Boundaries and Division of the Land

Numbers 35 – The 48 Levitical Cities, including the 6 Cities of Refuge

Numbers 36 – Some Inheritance Laws

Interesting Historical and Geographical Facts:

Aaron lived from 1530 BC to 1407 BC and died at Mt. Hor at the age of 123. Moses lived from 1527 BC to 1407 BC – 40 years in Pharaoh’s court, 40 years as a shepherd in Midian, and 40 years leading Israel from Egypt to Canaan.

At this time in history the greatest world powers were: the Egyptians, ruled by Thutmose IV and Amenhotep III; the Hittites, ruled by Shuppiliumas; the Babylonians; and the Assyrians.

King Og of Bashan was a giant in stature. According to Deuteronomy 3:11, Og’s iron bed was nine cubits long and four cubits wide (4m by 1,8m).

The Israelites camped at 21 different places during their journey from Egypt to Canaan. Only a few of these places have been identified, such as Kadesh Barnea and Ezion Geber. The King’s Highway (which the Israelites used) runs from Damascus to the Gulf of Aqabah. Its history extends from before 2000 BC to the present time.

Questions

1. How did God’s nation of Israel behave after promising to obey God’s law?
2. What can we learn from this about our own lives?
3. How did God remain faithful to His covenant of grace?
4. Why did Korah rebel against Moses and Aaron?
5. Against whom were they rebelling when they rebelled against Moses?
6. What was the sin of Moses that prevented him from reaching Canaan?
7. How did Jesus use the incident regarding the bronze serpent?
8. How did God make sure Balaam would speak only the truth?
9. How did God bless Israel through Balaam?
10. How did many Israelites forfeit God’s blessing?
11. How did Priest Phinehas show his zeal for the Lord?
12. How did Balaam hurt the Israelites, and how did he lose his life?
13. Which tribes settled east of the Jordan River? Why?