

THE WILDERNESS JOURNEY
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**IV. THE JOURNEY OF THE ISRAELITES FROM KADESH-BARNEA TO
THE PLAINS OF MOAB (Num. 33:37-48)**

**A. THE ISRAELITES DEPARTED FROM KADESH-BARNES AND WANDERED IN THE
WILDERNESS SOME 38 YEARS (Num. 15:1-20:21;Dt. 2:14)**

1. Some events which occurred during these years of wandering.
 - a. During these years of wandering Moses was confronted with the rebellion of Korah and his crowd (Num. 16:1-35). Korah and some 250 leaders in Israel challenged Moses and Aaron's authority. Even when God destroyed these rebels, the people still murmured against Moses and Aaron saying they had killed the people of the Lord. This resulted in God sending a plague which destroyed some 14,700 of them (Num. 16:36-50).
 - b. During this time of wandering, as a result of the murmurings of the people, God caused Aaron's rod to bud and blossom and then bring forth almonds. This rod was a miraculous sign against those who murmured and rebelled against Aaron's priesthood and it was laid up to prevent others from murmuring and put into the ark of the covenant (Num. 17:10; Heb. 9:4).
 - c. During this time of wandering the children of Israel came again to Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin. At this time Miriam died and was buried there (Num. 20:1).
 - d. During this time at Kadesh the children of Israel strove against Moses and Aaron because there was no water. When the Lord commanded Moses to speak unto the rock there, Moses had gotten so over-wrought with the people that he smote the rock. As a result of Moses' disobedience, he forfeited the blessing of bringing the Israelites into the land of Canaan (Num. 20:2-12). This place was rightly called Meribah which means "strife" (Num. 20:13).
 - e. During this time at Kadesh, Moses sent messengers to the King of Edom and his people, who were descendents of Esau, asking permission to pass through their land. The Edomites refused to give the children of Israel passage through their land so the Israelites turned from that way (Num. 20:14-21).
2. Some applications we can make from these events.
 - a. Notice there's a certain principle involved in the incident concerning Korah and his crowd. People in a church need to realize that a pastor has a special calling from God and he should be highly esteemed and followed as an under-shepherd of Christ (Heb. 5:4; 13:7, 17; I Thess. 5:12,13).
 - b. One would think that the children of Israel had seen enough examples of how God dealt with rebels and murmurers to learn not to follow their example, but that was not the case. Many followed the very same example (Num. 16:1-50; 20:2-13).

We should realize that we will either follow good examples in God's service and be blessed, or we will follow bad examples and be chastened of the Lord. The Scriptures point out to us that we should be very discerning about this, even among believers (Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5:9-11; Titus 3:10).

- c. Notice as the Edomites refused to let the Israelites pass through their land, we can expect others of this world to disappoint us and mistreat us at times as we follow God's leading (Jn. 15:18,19; 16:33).

B. AFTER THE YEARS OF WANDERING THE ISRAELITES LEFT THE WILDERNESS OF ZIN WHICH IS KADESH (Num. 33:36) AND ENCAMPLED AT MT. HOR (Num. 20:22).

1. Some events which occurred at Mt. Hor.

At Mt. Hor, the Lord ordered Moses to take Aaron and his son Eleazar up on the mountain and to strip Aaron of his garments and put them upon his son. There also Aaron died. Here we find that Aaron was also disobedient with Moses at Meribah-Kadesh (Num. 20:23-29).

2. An application which we can make from what happened at Mt. Hor.

Aaron had faithfully served the Lord along side Moses. He had stood on the Lord's side with Moses and been his spokesman for more than 40 years. He had born the trials and the burdens of a rebellious people. However, Aaron had to go the way of all flesh. He had served God for many years but he had finished the course God had for him and he had to step aside and let another take his place. Moses also had to do this, every other servant of the Lord has had to do this, and so must we if Jesus tarries His coming. Notice what Heb. 13:14 says along with I Pet. 1:24,25.

C. FINALLY, THE ISRAELITES LEFT MT. HOR AND ENCAMPELLED IN THE PLAINS OF MOAB AFTER SOME SEVEN ENCAMPMENTS ALONG THE WAY (Num. 33:41-49).

1. Some events which occurred on the way to the plains of Moab (Num. 21:1-35).

- a. When the Israelites left Mt. Hor their years of wandering were over and they began their march toward Moab. At this time king Arad, the king of the Canaanites in the south, fought against them but the Lord delivered the Canaanites into their hand (Num. 21:1-4). The place of this victory was called Hormah meaning "destruction".
- b. Next the Israelites spoke against Moses because there was no bread or water and they despised the manna. This led to God judging them but when they repented God directed Moses to make a brazen serpent and instructed them to look in faith to be healed (Num. 21:5-9).
- c. On the march to Moab the Israelites defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites and Og, the king of Bashan, and possessed their land (Num. 21:21-35).

2. Some events which happened in the plains of Moab.

A. Firstly, when Balak, the king of the Moabites, saw what Israel had done to the

Amorites, he sent messengers to Balaam to come and curse the Israelites. Balaam was a hireling prophet who had a reputation of being able to bless or curse others (Num. 22:6). We notice from 3 different places Balaam was told of the Lord to pronounce a blessing upon Israel and not a curse. Balaam, however, did teach Balak how to corrupt the people whom God had blessed and they committed harlotry with the Moabites. This resulted in a plague which killed twenty-four thousand (Num. 23-25).

- b. While the Israelites encamped in the plains of Moab, Moses was called of the Lord to Mt. Abarim to see the land of Canaan and to prepare for his death (Num. 27:12-14).
- c. While in the plains of Moab, the Israelites slew the 5 kings of the Midianites, slew Balaam, the hireling prophet, but a plague came upon them for harlotry with the Midianite women (Num. 31:1-24).
- d. While in the plains of Moab, the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh asked Moses for the land on the east side of Jordan. Moses agreed with the condition that they go first in battle before their brethren in taking Canaan (Num. 32:1-33).
- e. While in the plains of Moab, Moses gave instructions about dividing the land and also gave the law to the new generation (Num. 34-36; Dt. 1:1-33:29).
- f. Finally, while in the plains of Moab, Moses went up to Mt. Nebo, to the top of Mt. Pisgah, and the Lord showed him the land of Canaan. After this Moses died and the Lord buried him in a valley in the land of Moab (Dt. 34:1-12).

3. Some applications we can make from these events.

- a. As Balaam was an hireling prophet we should be aware that many preachers like him have sold out to the devil and this world for material gain. The Bible warns us of "the way of Balaam" (II Pet. 2:15). This means to use God's gift for money. The Bible mentions "the error of Balaam" (Jude II). This means the failure to see that God's blessings are predicated on a covenant relationship through the blood of Christ. The Bible mentions "the doctrine of Balaam" (Rev. 2:14). This is the teaching that believers can conform to this world with no separation.
- b. Notice in the account of the brazen serpent there is a wonderful type of Christ who was made sin for us (II Cor. 5:21). And when the Lord Jesus was talking with Nicodemus, He used this very same account to point out how He would be lifted up and what was needful for the new birth (Jn. 3:14-16).