

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 15, Journey to Canaan Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 15, Journey to Canaan, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This document presents a lecture by Dr. Elaine Phillips on Old Testament Literature, specifically focusing on the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. The lecture covers the Israelites' journey from Mount Sinai toward Canaan, highlighting key events, themes, and lessons from Numbers 11 through the end of Numbers. Dr. Phillips explores the recurring themes of discontent, rebellion, God's judgment, and the role of leadership through specific incidents like the complaints about manna, Miriam's leprosy, the spies' report, Korah's rebellion, and Balaam's prophecies. She uses biblical text, maps, and images to provide context. The lecture concludes with an overview of Deuteronomy 27-34, encompassing the renewal of the covenant and Moses' final moments.

2. 32 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 15 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → OT Introduction → OT Lit).



**Phillips_OTLit_Sessi
on15.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 15, Journey to Canaan

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. Elaine Phillips' Old Testament Literature Lecture 15 on Numbers and Deuteronomy 27-28:

Briefing Document: Dr. Elaine Phillips' Lecture 15 - Numbers and Deuteronomy 27-28

I. Overview:

This lecture provides an overview of the Israelites' journey from Mount Sinai to the Jordan Valley, focusing on key narratives in the Book of Numbers and the reiteration of covenant blessings and curses in Deuteronomy. Dr. Phillips emphasizes recurring themes of rebellion, God's mercy and judgment, and leadership challenges. She also highlights the importance of careful textual analysis, considering historical and cultural contexts.

II. Key Themes and Ideas:

- **The Journey from Sinai to Canaan:** The lecture traces the Israelites' movement, highlighting key locations like Kadesh Barnea and the wilderness of Zin. Dr. Phillips uses maps and visuals to illustrate the harshness of the terrain and the challenges faced by the Israelites. "We'll try to make our way from Mount Sinai all the way to overlooking the Jordan Valley, and therefore, after your exam, we're going to conquer the land. That's the way it's going to go."
- **Accomplishments at Sinai:** The lecture outlines what was accomplished during their year camped at Mount Sinai: articulation of the covenant (Ten Commandments, moral/ethical/civil/ritual stipulations), census-taking, establishment of camp organization, building the tabernacle, and institution of worship and the priesthood. "God has given his covenant...Stated in the Ten Commandments...So, the covenant has been articulated. They've got themselves established."
- **Recurring Themes of Rebellion and Discontent:** A central theme is the Israelites' constant complaining and rebellion against God and Moses, even after experiencing God's provision and protection. "As you look at these incidents, starting with Chapter 11 and going actually all the way through the Balaam incident that we're going to kind of close down with today, there are some themes that keep coming back over and over and over again."

- **God's Mercy and Judgment:** While the Israelites frequently rebel, God demonstrates both mercy and judgment. He chastises them to bring them back to the covenant relationship (referencing Leviticus 26). Dr. Phillips emphasizes the educational purpose of God's discipline. "God is merciful, but God also judges, chastises, and deals with the rebellion...God is chastising in order to bring the people back. And that's always the intent."
- **Challenges of Leadership:** Moses faces constant opposition and criticism, illustrating the difficulties inherent in leading God's people. The lecture connects this to Gordon College's mission of training servant leaders, emphasizing that leadership often involves facing adversity. "One of the things I suspect you noticed as you read through this is that Moses is perpetually under attack...Every time he turns around, he's addressing recalcitrant people who don't want to do what they're supposed to do. And that's what good leaders get stuck with."
- **Specific Incidents and Lessons (Numbers 11-21):**
- **Numbers 11 (Quail and 70 Elders):** The Israelites crave delicacies, demonstrating ingratitude. God provides quail but also sends a plague. Moses is given 70 elders to help him lead.
- **Numbers 12 (Miriam and Aaron's Rebellion):** Miriam and Aaron criticize Moses for his Cushite wife, but the underlying issue is pride. Miriam is struck with leprosy. Dr. Phillips highlights the careful reading of the Hebrew text to discern Miriam's primary role in the rebellion and discusses possible identities of the "Cushite wife."
- **Numbers 13-14 (The Spies):** The spies return with a mixed report, emphasizing the strength of the inhabitants of Canaan. The people refuse to enter the land, leading to a 40-year period of wandering. Moses intercedes for the people.
- **Numbers 16 (Korah's Rebellion):** Korah, a Levite, and others rebel against Moses and Aaron, seeking the priesthood. God judges the rebels with the earth swallowing them up and fire consuming the 250 men offering incense. The incident reinforces the importance of accepting God's designated roles and not being driven by competition. "Typically, we are never content with what God gives us, and competition is always getting in there."
- **Numbers 20 (Water from the Rock):** Moses strikes the rock instead of speaking to it, disobeying God and failing to honor Him as holy. As a result, Moses is not allowed to enter the Promised Land.

- **Numbers 21 (Bronze Serpent):** God sends venomous snakes as a punishment for complaining. He instructs Moses to make a bronze serpent on a pole, and those who look at it are healed. Dr. Phillips notes the unusual nature of this image and its connection to John 3:14-16, where Jesus compares himself to the serpent being lifted up. "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life."
- **Balaam (Numbers 22-24, 31):**
 - Balaam's complex character is explored. He appears to be a prophet, even uttering prophecies given to him by God. "In all four oracles, he's uttering things that God has given him to say."
 - However, 2 Peter 2 labels him a false prophet who "loved the wages of wickedness."
 - The lecture connects Balaam's prophetic pronouncements with his later advice to the Moabites to use Moabite women to seduce Israelite men into idolatry (Baal of Peor - Numbers 25), therefore causing them to sin against God.
 - Balaam is eventually killed by the Israelites.
- **Deuteronomy 27-28:** The blessings and curses of the covenant are reiterated, mirroring Leviticus 26. Moses sings a song as a "witness" against the people for their future sins.
- **Death of Moses:** The lecture touches on the postscript about Moses' death in Deuteronomy 34, noting that it was likely added later. God gives Moses a supernatural vision of the Promised Land from Mount Nebo.

III. Key Quotes:

- *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."* (Psalm 51:10)
- *"We'll try to make our way from Mount Sinai all the way to overlooking the Jordan Valley, and therefore, after your exam, we're going to conquer the land. That's the way it's going to go."*
- *"God has given his covenant...Stated in the Ten Commandments...So, the covenant has been articulated. They've got themselves established."*
- *"As you look at these incidents, starting with Chapter 11 and going actually all the way through the Balaam incident that we're going to kind of close down with"*

today, there are some themes that keep coming back over and over and over again."

- *"God is merciful, but God also judges, chastises, and deals with the rebellion...God is chastising in order to bring the people back. And that's always the intent."*
- *"One of the things I suspect you noticed as you read through this is that Moses is perpetually under attack...Every time he turns around, he's addressing recalcitrant people who don't want to do what they're supposed to do. And that's what good leaders get stuck with."*
- *"Typically, we are never content with what God gives us, and competition is always getting in there."*
- *"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life."*

IV. Implications and Takeaways:

- The lecture emphasizes the importance of recognizing human fallibility and the constant temptation to rebel against God's will.
- It highlights the need for leaders to remain faithful and intercede on behalf of their people, even in the face of adversity.
- It underscores the power of God's grace and mercy, even in the midst of judgment.
- It demonstrates the interconnectedness of the Old and New Testaments, particularly through the image of the bronze serpent and its connection to the crucifixion of Jesus.

4. Study Guide: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 15, Journey to Canaan

Old Testament Literature: Numbers and Deuteronomy Study Guide

I. Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What were the main accomplishments of the Israelites during their year-long encampment at Mount Sinai?
2. Describe the two ways in which God responded to the Israelites' complaints about manna in Numbers 11.
3. According to Dr. Phillips, why might Miriam have been the one punished with leprosy in Numbers 12, rather than both her and Aaron?
4. What specific fear did the spies have about the inhabitants of Canaan that led them to discourage the Israelites from entering the land?
5. What was the main issue that drove Korah's rebellion in Numbers 16, and who joined him?
6. What specific action did Moses take at the rock in Kadesh (Numbers 20) that disobeyed God's instructions, and what was the consequence?
7. Describe the unusual remedy God provided for the Israelites who were bitten by venomous snakes in Numbers 21.
8. According to Dr. Phillips, why is Balaam considered a false prophet, despite delivering oracles given to him by God?
9. What was the "under the table" advice that Balaam gave to the Moabites, and what was its effect?
10. In Deuteronomy, how is the covenant renewed, and what is included in this renewal?

II. Quiz Answer Key

1. During their year at Mount Sinai, God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments and the stipulations of the covenant, establishing moral, ethical, civil, social, and ritual guidelines; He also ordered a census and instructed them how to encamp. Additionally, the Tabernacle was built as a manifestation of God's presence.

2. God responded to the Israelites' complaints about manna by sending quail in droves, leading to a plague among those who ate gluttonously, and by appointing 70 elders to share the burden of leadership with Moses and endowing them with His spirit.
3. Miriam may have been singled out for punishment in Numbers 12 because the Hebrew verb form indicated she was the instigator, because she was the oldest sibling, or because, as the designated high priest, leprosy would have made it impossible for Aaron to carry out his duties.
4. The spies were afraid of the powerful and large inhabitants of Canaan, particularly the descendants of Anak, who they described as giants. The spies also noted that the cities were heavily fortified, which would be a challenge for the semi-nomadic Israelites to conquer.
5. Korah, a Levite, rebelled against Moses and Aaron because he desired the exclusive office of the priesthood, not just the duties of a Levite; he was joined by Reubenites, including Dathan and Aviram, who felt their tribe deserved more prominence, and 250 leaders.
6. Instead of speaking to the rock as God instructed, Moses struck the rock twice in anger; as a result, Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land, as he did not honor God as holy in this action.
7. God instructed Moses to create a bronze serpent and place it on a pole, so that anyone who had been bitten by a snake could look at it and live.
8. Balaam is considered a false prophet because, despite delivering oracles given to him by God, he ultimately advised the Moabites on how to lead the Israelites astray through sexual immorality and idolatry.
9. Balaam advised the Moabites to use their women to seduce the Israelite men into sexual immorality and the worship of Baal. This caused many Israelite men to engage in sacred prostitution, drawing them away from God and resulting in the plague discussed in Numbers 25.
10. In Deuteronomy, the covenant is renewed through a reiteration of the blessings and cursings associated with obedience and disobedience to God's laws. The people are given instructions on how to articulate the covenant when they enter the land.

III. Essay Questions

1. Discuss the theme of leadership in the Book of Numbers, focusing on the challenges faced by Moses and the various rebellions against his authority. How does God respond to these challenges, and what lessons can be learned about leadership in the context of faith?
2. Analyze the theme of discontent in the Book of Numbers. What are the primary complaints of the Israelites, and how do these complaints reveal their underlying attitudes towards God and His provision? Explore the consequences of their discontent and the ways in which God addresses it.
3. Examine the significance of the "Water from the Rock" incident in Numbers 20. What does this event reveal about the importance of obedience and honoring God's holiness, particularly for those in leadership positions? How does this incident contribute to the broader narrative of Moses' journey and his relationship with God?
4. Evaluate the character of Balaam as presented in Numbers 22-24 and 31. Was Balaam a true prophet of God, or was he primarily motivated by personal gain? Support your argument by referencing specific passages and analyzing Balaam's actions, words, and ultimate fate.
5. Discuss the relationship between the Books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. What are the key similarities and differences between these two books? What do the final chapters of Deuteronomy add to our understanding of the Israelites' journey and the establishment of their covenant relationship with God?

IV. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Covenant:** A binding agreement between God and His people, outlining responsibilities, promises, and consequences for obedience or disobedience.
- **Kadesh Barnea:** An oasis in northern Sinai where the Israelites spent a significant amount of time during their wilderness wanderings.
- **Manna:** The miraculous food provided by God to sustain the Israelites during their time in the wilderness.
- **Mount Sinai (Jebel Musa):** The mountain where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and established the covenant with the Israelites.

- **Nephilim:** Mysterious people mentioned in Genesis 6:4 and Numbers 13:33, often associated with giants and great size.
- **Numbers:** The fourth book of the Pentateuch, recounting the Israelites' journey from Mount Sinai to the borders of the Promised Land, marked by census-taking, rebellions, and God's faithfulness.
- **Deuteronomy:** The fifth book of the Pentateuch, consisting of Moses' final speeches to the Israelites, reiterating the Law, emphasizing obedience, and preparing them for entering the Promised Land.
- **Tabernacle:** A portable sanctuary built by the Israelites to house the Ark of the Covenant and serve as a place of worship and God's presence.
- **Wilderness of Zin:** A desert region near Kadesh Barnea where the Israelites experienced further trials and rebellions.
- **Balaam:** A non-Israelite diviner/prophet who was hired by Balak, the king of Moab, to curse the Israelites.
- **Sheol:** The Hebrew term for the afterlife, often depicted as a shadowy realm where the spirits of the dead reside.
- **Seraphim:** The Hebrew term for the venomous snakes sent by God to punish the Israelites for their complaints (Numbers 21:6). Also refers to celestial beings who attend God's throne.
- **Messianic Prophecy:** A prophecy that speaks of the coming of the Messiah, the future king and savior of Israel.
- **Redactor:** An editor who compiles and arranges existing texts, often adding their own commentary and interpretations.

5. FAQs on Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 15, Journey to Canaan, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Old Testament Literature: Numbers and Deuteronomy FAQ

1. What was accomplished during the Israelites' year-long stay at Mount Sinai?

During their year at Mount Sinai, the Israelites received God's covenant, including the Ten Commandments and detailed stipulations for moral, ethical, civil, social, and ritual life. They took a census, organized the tribes' encampments around the tabernacle, and built the tabernacle itself, signifying God's dwelling among them. The worship system was instituted with sacrifices, and the priesthood began serving as mediators. This prepared them to transition from a group of former slaves into a structured nation ready to move towards Canaan.

2. What are some recurring themes in the Book of Numbers, and what lessons can be learned from them?

Recurring themes in Numbers include discontent, rebellion against God and Moses, God's provision, God's judgement, and God's mercy and discipline aimed at restoring the people. One key lesson is that leadership, even divinely appointed leadership, is often met with opposition in a sinful world. The Israelites' constant complaining despite God's provision highlights the human tendency towards ingratitude and the need for constant correction and guidance.

3. Why did Miriam receive leprosy as punishment for speaking against Moses?

The text suggests Miriam was the instigator, the first and primary speaker against Moses, indicated by the feminine singular verb form used in Hebrew. The text also states she is the oldest of the siblings, suggesting seniority, therefore greater culpability. She was punished with leprosy while Aaron was not, because as the high priest Aaron could not fulfill his duties with leprosy, a form of uncleanness.

4. In Numbers 13-14, the spies bring back a report about the land of Canaan. What were the key factors that led the Israelites to refuse to enter the land, and what were the consequences of their decision?

The spies reported the land was fertile and abundant, but also that it was inhabited by powerful people living in fortified cities, including descendants of the Nephilim, who seemed like giants to them. Overwhelmed by fear, ten of the twelve spies discouraged the people, leading them to believe they were too weak to conquer the land. As a result, the Israelites rebelled against God's command to enter the Promised Land. God then condemned that entire generation (those 20 years and older) to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until they all died, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb.

5. In the rebellion of Korah (Numbers 16), who was involved, and what were their grievances against Moses and Aaron?

Korah, a Levite, along with Dathan and Abiram, Reubenites, and 250 other prominent leaders, rebelled against Moses and Aaron. Korah and his Levite followers were dissatisfied with their roles in the tabernacle and sought the priesthood, which was reserved for Aaron's descendants. The Reubenites may have harbored resentment because their tribe lost its firstborn status due to a past transgression. The text shows the rebellion grew over time, and also demonstrates competition among leaders.

6. What was Moses' mistake in Numbers 20 when he struck the rock for water at Kadesh, and what was the consequence?

God instructed Moses to speak to the rock to bring forth water. However, in anger, Moses struck the rock twice and asked, "Must we bring you water out of this rock?" Moses disobeyed God's direct command and took credit for providing water, instead of honoring God's holiness in front of the people. As a result, God barred Moses from entering the Promised Land.

7. What is the significance of the bronze serpent (Numbers 21), and how does it relate to the New Testament?

When the Israelites complained about the manna and lack of water, God sent venomous snakes among them. To save those who were bitten, God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent and place it on a pole. Those who looked at the serpent were healed. In John 3:14-16, Jesus uses this image to explain how He, too, must be "lifted up" (crucified) so that all who believe in Him might have eternal life. The bronze serpent, an unlikely object of healing, foreshadows the crucifixion, an unlikely source of salvation.

8. Who was Balaam, and what role did he play in the Israelites' journey?

Balaam was a diviner or prophet known for his ability to bless or curse. The Moabite king, Balak, hired Balaam to curse Israel, fearing their growing power. Although Balaam initially sought guidance from God and was told not to curse Israel, he eventually tried to manipulate God into allowing him to curse them in exchange for monetary reward. God ultimately forced Balaam to bless Israel through a series of oracles. Though he initially appears to be a prophet of the Lord, the New Testament condemns him as a false teacher who "loved the wages of wickedness." Balaam later advised the Moabites to seduce the Israelite men into idolatry, leading to a plague and further demonstrating his wickedness.