

Numbers

What is a Nazirite?

3 Rules: Numb 6

No dead body touching

No grape products

No razor

What was the function of the Nazirite?

Person separating himself to YHWH

God over one's food, family & body

Visible memorial

Giving up things for God

Completion of Nazirite vow

Sacrifices

Shave head & burn hair

Samson, Samuel, Paul takes Nazirite vow (Acts 21:24ff)

Jesus not a Nazirite (Nazarene)

Oldest piece of Scripture ever found: Num 6:23ff; 600 BC not= P (450 BC)

Numbers Cycles

Problem

Peoples' complaint

God's response

Moses mediates

God relents

Lesson summarized

Mini-cycle: Numbers 11:1-2

Problem: Desert Hardships

People's complaint:

God's response: fire burned in outskirts of camp

Moses mediates: Moses prays to God

God relents: fire dies down

Summary: Place called Taberah because fire of LORD

Why is it the people complain & God judges

Moses complains and God helps him (Num 11:2,10; 11-15)

Complaint versus Lament distinction

Inability of Christians to verbalize lament

Are you supposed to discipline children in anger?

Why does God discipline Israel when He is angry? (Num 11:4ff)

Is anger always wrong? (conditions; justice issues)

Moses use of rhetorical questions

Can a Christian person ever long to die?

On workaholic Moses: sharing the load (11:16f)—70 elders → Sanhedrin (Eldad)

What do you think about inter-racial marriage?

What does the Bible say?

Moses and the Cushite wife

Moses and the prophetic function

Miriam and God's ironic sense of humor

Why not Aaron?

Who wrote Num. 12:3?

Doesn't this statement from the pen of Moses sound a little odd? Joshua?

Could a humble person write this?

Does humility really fit the context?

Another way of looking at it: "oppressed"

Can a human being have impact on God?

Can God change? Is He static or dynamic?

If He can't change is it possible for Him to think and interact? How is relationship possible?

If He is dynamic in what sense or areas can He change? Is everything up for grabs?

Does God still experience choice?

Giants in the Land:

Was Moses wrong for sending out spies? (Num 13)

Report: Milk and honey -- grasshopper vision (Num 13:26-33)

Accusation against God (Num 14:3-4)

Joshua and Caleb: men of courage and vision (Num 14:5ff), contra majority

God's response:

God's response: I will strike them down (14:11f)

Real issue is belief (14:11) and holding God in contempt (14:11)

How does Moses argue with God? (14:13)

Lord's reputation

Lord's character

God doesn't strike them down! (14:20)

"as you asked"

Is it possible to be forgiven and yet have to pay consequences? 40 yrs-->death

Korah rebellion: Num 16

On the demand to be special/separated (Num 16:3, 8f)

Moses gets angry (16:15)

Does God have a sense of humor (ironic)?

So you want to be holy?

Power struggles & projected motives of leaders (Num 16:13)

Moses new role: anti-mediator then mediator

Moses as prophet short term prophecy (vs. 28)

Separated permanently (16:33) Sheol=grave

Some people never learn: (Num 16:41)

Can people really change?

Moses hitting the rock: Num. 20

Chapter context: death of Miriam + Aaron

Why did God nail Moses so hard just for hitting a rock?

What's so wrong with hitting a rock?

Real issue: not acting in trust/faith 20:12

- God weighs thoughts and intents of heart
- On the responsibility of leaders
- On consequences for actions—actions matter

Bronze Pole Snake—Num. 21

Complaint 21:5→ snakes 21:6

Look and live 21:8

Jesus & Nicodemus: John 3:14

Numbers Lessons:

One person can make a difference for a nation, prayer changes things

Faithlessness of Israel // faithfulness of God

Forgiveness yet consequences

God is dynamic not static: relationally interactive

Complaint versus lament

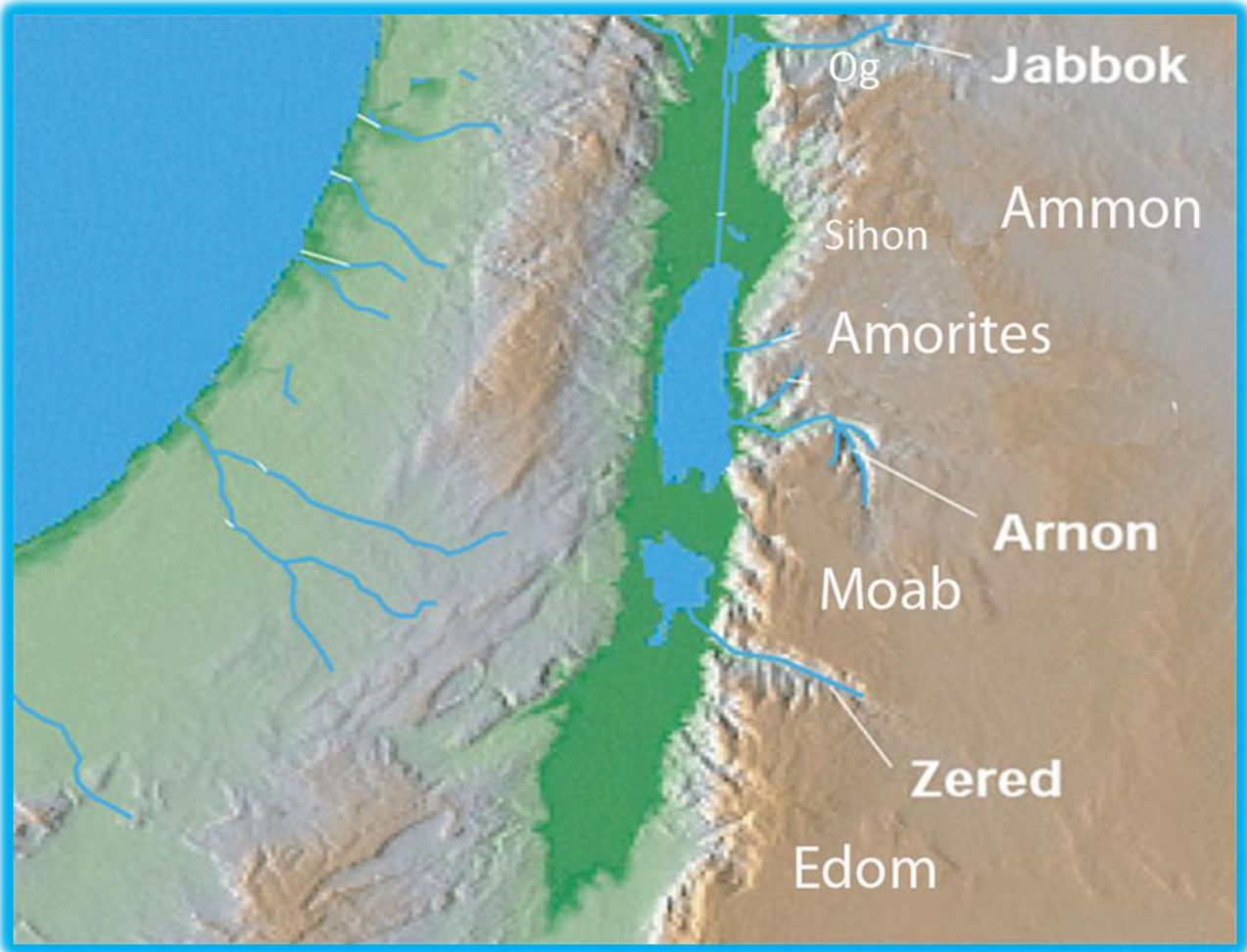
Red Heifer – Numbers 19

Why did the Moabites hire Balaam? Numbers 22-24

What have Og and Sihon got to do with it?

Why did Balak send to Mesopotamia to get curser?

Were the Israelites the only ones who knew YHWH?



Balaam

Is Balaam good or bad, saint or sinner?

- OT = Numbers = good (Num. 22:8, 13)
- NT = major bad (Jude 11; Rev 2:14)

Did Balaam know God? 22:18

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Did Balaam know God? 22:18

Balaam outside the Bible

Name found: destroyer—Deir Alla, Jordan find 1967/1976 trans. dates 800 BC

“The misfortunes of the Book of Balaam, son of Beor. A divine seer was he.
The gods came to him at night.
And he beheld a vision in accordance with El’s utterance. They said to Balaam, son of Beor...”

Balaam’s major struggle: money or God’s word

Faithful to God’s word: Num 22:8, 18

Donkey narrative: 22:21ff

- Why did God tell Balaam to go and then try to kill him?

Irony: donkey sees more than the seer,
who speaks, sword

Balaam’s 4 oracles

First oracle: Who can curse but Yahweh? (Num 23:7f)

Second oracle: God’s character and promises don’t change: Num 23:19

On God and change

How do you fit that with God changing his mind before

Promise keeper

Character: doesn’t lie

Interactive creative possibilities—different ways of speaking:

Balaam’s 4 oracles

Second oracle: God is their king (Num 23:21f)

Third oracle: Human king

- On ecstatic prophets (24:4)
- King imagery (24:7)
- Dilemma of Divine / Human king

Fourth oracle: Messianic king (Num 24:17)

Balaam

Why was he portrayed so faithful in narrative?

Contrast to Israel’s unfaithfulness

Moabite link (Num 25:1ff) How to get Israel cursed --get them to sin

Balaam’s death—Num. 31:8, 16