

The Wilderness Wanderings

Exodus-Deuteronomy

Period of Bible history

Exodus. This period includes the sojourn, slavery, deliverance with an exodus, the covenant at Sinai, and the wandering in the wilderness.

Major Events

The Golden Calf (Exodus 32, Deuteronomy 9:13-29) At Mt. Sinai, the people shape and worship a golden calf while Moses is receiving the law from God.

Miriam and Aaron oppose Moses (Numbers 12). Miriam, Moses' sister, and Aaron, high priest of Israel, try to turn the people against Moses, claiming to also speak for God.

Spies enter the promised land (Numbers 13-14, Deuteronomy 1:19-46). Israel sends spies into the promised land. Most of the spies are pessimistic and advise against entering the land. Only Joshua and Caleb called the people to follow God's promises. God's response is to condemn that generation to wander in the wilderness.

Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16). Korah, a Levite, stirs the people against Moses. God opens up the earth under Korah and his followers.

The bronze serpent (Numbers 21:4-9). The people are again rebellious. God sends snakes among the people. Moses constructs a serpent for the people to look upon to be saved.

Balaam summoned to curse Israel (Numbers 22-24). King Balak of Moab summons Balaam to curse Israel. He refuses, once being talked into doing the right thing by his donkey.

Reuben and Gad occupy Gilead (Numbers 32). The people of Israel were to settle in Canaan, the promised land, but in their wilderness wanderings they managed to conquer territory outside of Canaan. One of these, Gilead, was occupied by the tribes of Reuben and Gad. They are allowed to keep this region provided they fight with the rest of Israel.

The death of Moses (Deuteronomy 34). After decades of leading the people of Israel Moses has led them to the Jordan river, preparing them to cross into the promised land. God had said Moses would not be permitted to cross with them. Joshua would lead the people into the land. In Deuteronomy 34 Moses dies and is laid to rest.

Important Individuals

Moses - Leader of the people of Israel.

Aaron - Older brother of Moses, high priest of Israel.

Miriam - Moses' sister. Usually thought to be the sister that watched over Moses while he was a baby in the river.

Joshua and Caleb - The two spies that called the people to conquer the land. Joshua later replaces Moses as leader of Israel.

Korah - He was a Kohathite, the family of Levites charged with transporting the Ark. He stirred the people against Moses, challenging Moses' rule and Aaron's priesthood.

Balaam - A prophet in Mesopotamia who was summoned to curse the people of Israel. He does not curse them, but was motivated by self interest rather than faithfulness.

Covenant: The Old Testament Story

The following outlines are not comprehensive but try to pick up the major events.

Outline of Numbers

- I. Preparing to enter the land (1-12)
 - A. Organizing the camp (1-4)
 - B. Organizing the worship (5-10)
 - C. Problems with the people (11)
 - D. Miriam and Aaron oppose Moses (12)
- II. 40 years in the wilderness (13-36)
 - A. Spying and shying from the promised land (13-14)
 - B. Various laws (15)
 - C. Korah's rebellion (16)
 - D. The priests (17-19)
 - E. Various events in the wilderness (20-27)
 1. Miriam, Moses' sister, dies (20:1)
 2. Moses strikes the rock in a disobedient manner (20:10-13)
 3. Aaron dies (20:22-29)
 4. The bronze serpent (21:4-9)
 5. Balaam (22-24)
 6. The people worship Baal (25)
 - F. Census taking and laws (26-30)
 - G. More various events (31-33)
 - H. Organizing the land (34-36)

Outline of Deuteronomy

- I. Moses' first speech: general history of the wilderness wandering (1:1-4:43)
 - A. Moses predicts the eventual decline and restoration of Israel (4:25-31)
- II. Moses' second speech: recalling the Law (4:44-26:19)
 - A. The ten commandments (5:1-21)
 - B. The great commandment and the Shema (6:1-9)
 - C. The golden calf (9:13-29)
- III. Moses' final speech: Law, worship, and renewal (27-30)
 - A. Promise of blessing for obedience (28:1-14)
 - B. Warning of cursing for disobedience (28:15-68)
 - C. Covenant renewal (29)
- IV. The death of Moses and Israel's new leadership (31-34)
 - A. Joshua to replace Moses (31:1-8)
 - B. Reading the law to the people (31:9-13)
 - C. Joshua commissioned (31:14-29)
 - D. The song of Moses (32)
 - E. Moses blesses Israel (33)
 - F. Moses' death and burial (34)