

Numbers 10:11—12

Bible Study

Review

Chapter 8

- Arranging of the lampstand in the tabernacle by Aaron
- The dedication of the Levites to serve

Chapter 9—Passover at Sinai

14th day of the 1st month of 2nd year after coming out of Egypt

- Institution of the 2nd Passover if someone missed the ceremony (14th day of 2nd Month)
- Description of the cloud's presence on their journey

Chapter 10:1—10 (Silver trumpets) [last instructions at Sinai]
Aaron's sons responsible for blowing the trumpets

- Summon the leaders
- Breaking of the camp
- To go to war in the land
- For feasts, beginning of months and over sacrifices

Numbers 10: 11—36

Israel leaves Sinai

¹¹Now it came to pass on the twentieth *day* of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony.

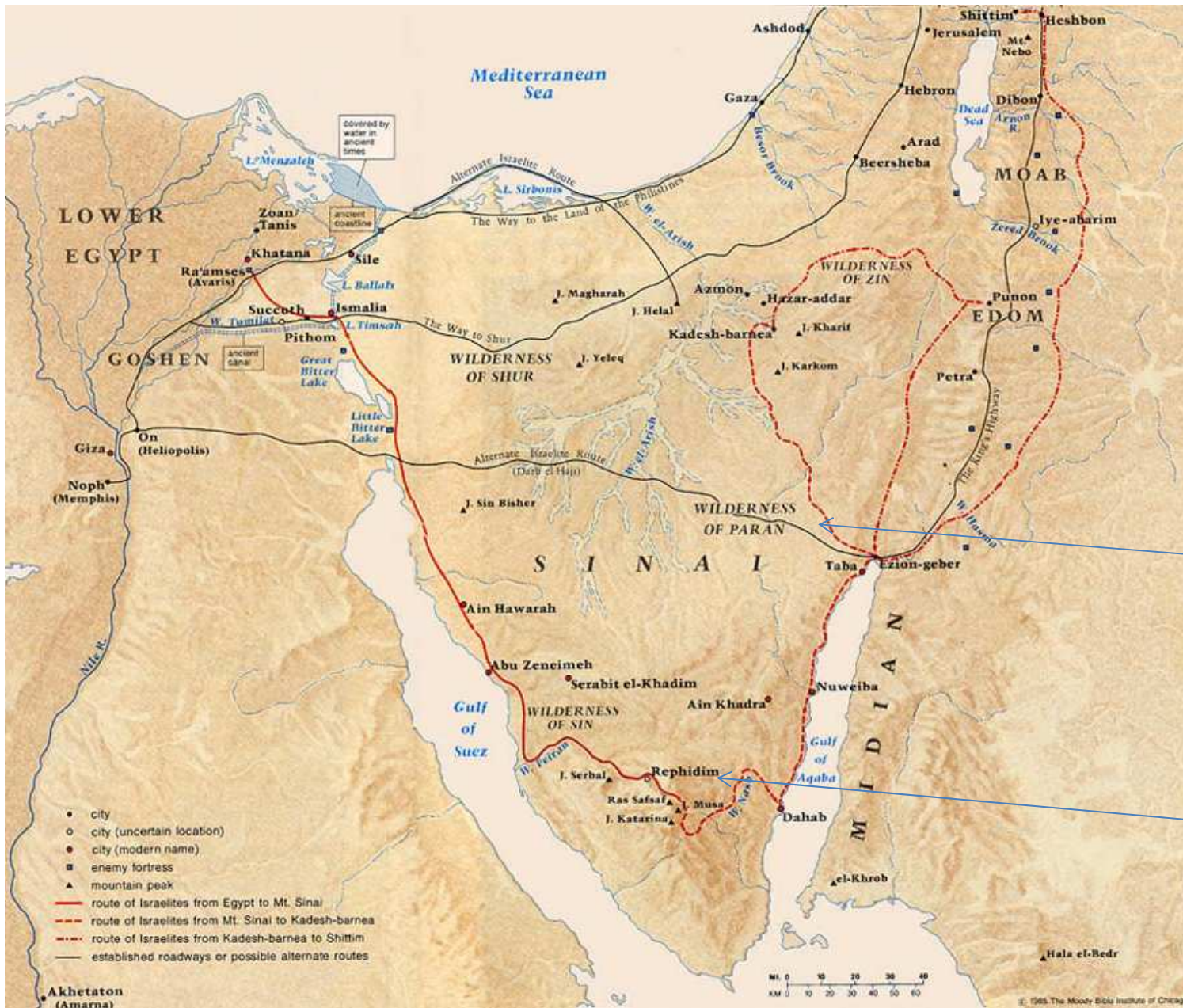
¹²And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran.

¹³So they started out for the first time according to the command of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

v.11 The people had been at Sinai for nearly a year; almost 14 months since leaving Egypt and 19 days since the census began at chapter 1:1

v. 12 “wilderness of Paran”—other OT scriptures indicate the Paran was north of Mt. Sinai and west of Midian
(New Int. Com. OT) “It may be that Paran was a general term descriptive of most of the wilderness areas of the Sinai”

v. 13 “by the hand of Moses”—seems to refer to the blowing of the trumpets to get the camp moving



Wilderness of Paran

Mt Sinai

v. 14-27 Tribal organization for the march

¹⁴The standard of the camp of the children of Judah set out first according to their armies; over their army was Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

¹⁵Over the army of the tribe of the children of Issachar *was* Nethanel the son of Zuar.

¹⁶And over the army of the tribe of the children of Zebulun *was* Eliab the son of Helon.

The 1st camp to move out was led by the tribe of Judah and included the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun

¹⁷Then the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set out, carrying the tabernacle.

The Gershonite and Merarite Levites, take down the tabernacle and set out after the first camp of tribes moved out—so that the tabernacle could be erected at the next stop by the time the Kohathites arrive with the holy items [v.21]

¹⁸And the standard of the camp of Reuben set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Elizur the son of Shedeur.

¹⁹Over the army of the tribe of the children of Simeon *was* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

²⁰And over the army of the tribe of the children of Gad *was* Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

The 2nd camp to move out was led by the tribe of Reuben and included Simeon and Gad

²¹Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things. (The tabernacle would be prepared for their arrival.)

After the 2nd tribal camp moved out, the Kohath Levites followed carrying the sacred items which included the lampstand, table of shewbread, the altar and utensils

²²And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Elishama the son of Ammihud.

²³Over the army of the tribe of the children of Manasseh *was* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

²⁴And over the army of the tribe of the children of Benjamin *was* Abidan the son of Gideoni

3rd camp moved out led by Ephraim and included the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin

²⁵Then the standard of the camp of the children of Dan (the rear guard of all the camps) set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

²⁶Over the army of the tribe of the children of Asher *was* Pagiel the son of Ocran.

²⁷And over the army of the tribe of the children of Naphtali *was* Ahira the son of Enan.

²⁸Thus *was* the order of march of the children of Israel, according to their armies, when they began their journey.

4th camp moved out led by Dan and included Asher and Naphtali

v. 29-32—Moses invites his brother in law, Hobab to accompany them on their journey and to scout for them [v.31]

²⁹Now Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel^f the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the Lord said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the Lord has promised good things to Israel."

³⁰And he said to him, "I will not go, but I will depart to my *own* land and to my relatives."

³¹So *Moses* said, "Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes."

³²And it shall be, if you go with us—indeed it shall be—that whatever good the Lord will do to us, the same we will do to you."

Moses' father in law, Reuel or Jethro, had given Moses valuable advice concerning organizing Israel [Ex. 18]

Now Moses asks Hobab to scout for Israel as being a Midianite he knew the desert areas surrounding Canaan

Though it is not stated here, apparently he did accept and continue with Israel. Judges 1:16 shows that his descendents the Kenites were in the land of Israel

³³So they departed from the mountain of the Lord on a journey **of three days**; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.

³⁴And the cloud of the Lord *was* above them by day when they went out from the camp.

³⁵So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said: "Rise up, O Lord! Let Your enemies be scattered, And let those who hate You flee before You."

³⁶And when it rested, he said: "Return, O Lord, *To* the many thousands of Israel."

(Zond. Bib. Bk. Com.) "the distance of the three-day journey (about thirty-five to forty-five miles).

This journey is reminiscent of Moses' request to Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to journey three days into the wilderness to worship their God" [Ex. 8:27]

v. 33 "the ark of the covenant went before them"

(NIV App. Com) "This indicates that unlike the rest of the tabernacle furniture [10:21; 2:17], the ark precedes the entire column of Israelites.

Perhaps the divine cloud that hovers over them [10:34], apparently for shade and protection, moves over the ark when it is time to halt. [9:17]

Chapter 11

The people complain

¹Now *when* the people complained, it displeased the Lord; for the Lord heard *it*, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed *some* in the outskirts of the camp.

²Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the Lord, the fire was quenched.

³So he called the name of the place [£]Taberah, because the fire of the Lord had burned among them.

v.1 “complained” (Heb.) ‘were as complainers’

(Companion) “In this word ...to mark the fact of the people’s turning back in their hearts”

The text gives no cause for the complaining...but God sent fire that consumed the outskirts of the camp

(New Int. Com. OT) “Although this phrase is unique, qaseh is used elsewhere to describe an outer boundary”

(Expositors) “The purging fire was limited to the outskirts of the camp, a mercy of the Lord...perhaps a burst of fire would not only judge the offenders...but will serve as a symbol of cleansing for the entire camp”



v. 3
Taberah

Mount Sinai

Would have lived on the outskirts of the camp, outside
the designated areas of the tribes—where the fire struck

⁴Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: “Who will give us meat to eat?”

“mixed multitude” (Heb. *Asapsup*) = “a mob of people scraped together” (Barnes)

(Theo. Dict. OT) “This masculine collective noun occurs once in Numbers 11:4 in reference to the motley collection of people who followed Israel from Egypt”

v.4 “mixed multitude”
(NIV) “rabble”

(Expositors) “This term points to a recurring source of complaints and trouble in the camp”

⁵We remember the fish which we ate **freely** in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic;
⁶but now our whole being *is* dried up; *there is* nothing at all except this manna *before* our eyes

v. 5 They remember the ‘good old days’...
They did not eat ‘**freely**’ because the price of the plenty they describe—was slavery

v. 5 “the fish...cucumbers, melons...”
(Expositors) “the poor in Egypt were able to supplement their diet with fish that are found in many canals and waterways.
We may suggest that they were exaggerating the variety and plenty of their diet in Egypt. But the contrast was sure: there are no fish or vegetables to be had in the desert.
The focus of faith, however, is that there should have been no food at all in the desert. That there was anything at all to eat was solely by God’s mercy.”

⁷Now the manna *was* like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium.

⁸The people went about and gathered *it*, ground *it* on millstones or beat *it* in the mortar, cooked *it* in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil.

⁹And when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it.

v. 7 “coriander seed”

(Zondervan Bible Backgrounds Com.)

“The association with coriander seed is likely an indicator of its taste, since that seed is used for flavoring (similar to sesame or poppy seeds)”

v. 7 “bdellium”

(TWOT) “Possibly a stone (pearl) or maybe a resin...a product of the land of Havilah”

(Tanakh, JSB) “Manna is described here as a rich and tasty food suitable for various modes of preparation.

This positive depiction of manna underscores the unjustified complaints of the people”

The complaining gets to Moses...he breaks down
v. 11-12 Moses blames God for the situation he is in

¹⁰Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the Lord was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased.

¹¹So Moses said to the Lord, “Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me?

¹²Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that You should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing child,’ to the land which You swore to their fathers?

¹³Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’

¹⁴I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden *is* too heavy for me.

¹⁵If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in Your sight—and do not let me see my wretchedness!”

(Und. Bible Com. Series) “Here, Moses complains that the burden of leading the people is so great that it must be a sign of God’s displeasure with him.”

v. 13 Moses says he can not meet their needs especially their crying for meat...and pleads for his own death v. 15

v. 14 “the burden is too heavy for me”

¹⁶So the Lord said to Moses: “Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you.

¹⁷Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that *is* upon you and will put *the same* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear *it* yourself alone.

God’s response was for Moses to select seventy proven elders to help with Moses’ burden, and they would be helped by means of God’s spirit

God's response to the people's demand for meat

¹⁸Then you shall say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the hearing of the Lord, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For *it was well with us in Egypt.*" Therefore the Lord will give you meat, and you shall eat.

¹⁹You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days,
²⁰but *for* a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the Lord who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?"'"

v. 20 "because you have despised the Lord who is among you"—they rejected God

(NICOT) "Verse 20 makes it clear the God is going to punish the people by giving them what they asked for—to excess...

Their wish to go back to Egypt was a wish to go back to a time before God was in their midst, and thus a rebellion against him"

v. 20 "until it comes out of your nostrils"

(Und. Bible Com. Series) "apparently refers to severe nausea"

²¹And Moses said, “The people whom I *am* among *are* six hundred thousand men on foot; yet You have said, ‘I will give them meat, that they may eat *for* a whole month.’

²²Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to provide enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to provide enough for them?”

²³And the Lord said to Moses, “Has the LORD’S arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not.”

(NSB) “The idea of such plentiful meat in the wilderness was something even Moses balked at, wondering how God could provide food for a company so large.

God’s response to Moses, has the Lord’s arm been shortened? Is a challenge to all people of faith. There is simply no limiting the power of God.

Jesus’ feedings of the multitudes are New Testament examples of God’s continuing ability to provide food for thousands.”

²⁴So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle.

²⁵Then the Lord came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that *was* upon him, and placed *the same* upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, [£]although they never did *so* again.

v. 24 (last part) “placed them around the tabernacle”

(Tyndale) “The spirit was bestowed within the court of the tabernacle, in the clean and holy area”

v. 25 (middle part) “the spirit rested upon them”

(NSB) “is a divine empowerment of the seventy elders who would aid Moses in the administration of the camp”

v. 25 (last part) “they prophesied”

(Parallel Com.) “Does this mean that the seventy elders received the gift of prophecy as possessed by Daniel or Isaiah?

A more reasonable approach is to interpret this as a forth telling event, and not that of foretelling. This is to say that these men taught, preached and exhorted with divine authority.”

v. 25 (middle part) “took of the Spirit that was upon him...”

(Expositors) “The taking of ‘some’ of the Spirit from Moses suggests the release of some of the burden that he bore. They will share in that work with him.

Sovereignly, mysteriously, graciously, the Lord apportioned the same Spirit that was on Moses on the seventy elders. The idea is not that the Spirit of God is divided into smaller units but that it is the very same Spirit of God who empowers Moses, that now animates these men. “

²⁶But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one *was* Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they *were* among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp.

²⁷And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”

²⁸So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, *one* of his choice men, answered and said, “Moses my lord, forbid them!”

²⁹Then Moses said to him, “Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord’S people were prophets *and* that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!”

³⁰And Moses returned to the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

(NSB) “For reasons that are not recorded, Eldad and Medad did not join the other elders at the tabernacle of meeting. Nonetheless, the Spirit of God came upon them and empowered them in their own camp.

When the word came to Moses that these men were prophesying even though they were not where they were supposed to be, Joshua was afraid that their possible influence in the community would distract from the authority of Moses.....Moses responded by wishing that all of God’s people were spirit empowered.”

³¹Now a wind went out from the Lord, and it brought quail from the sea and left *them* fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground.

³²And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp.

³³But while the meat *was* still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was aroused against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very great plague.

³⁴So he called the name of that place [£]Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.

v. 31-32 (NSB) "True to his promise [v.18-20], the Lord provided meat in the form of quail from the sea. He sent a strong wind that brought vast numbers of quail fluttering about three feet off the ground.

The people fell into a frenzy, killing the birds and gathering them all through the night and on into the next day."

v. 34 Kibroth Hattaavah= 'graves of lust'

A huge quantity of dead birds would quickly begin to rot in the hot desert—the plague was probably food poisoning

³⁵From Kibroth Hattaavah the people moved to Hazeroth, and camped at Hazeroth.



v. 35 Hazeroth

v. 34 Kibroth-Hattaavah

Chapter 12

Rebellion of Miriam and Aaron against Moses' authority

¹Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

“Ethiopian woman”—lot of speculation to who she was...there is no other record in the scriptures of this woman

The only wife we know of was Zipporah—a Midianite [Ex. 2:21; 4:18-20]

(Tyndale) “Of this Cushite woman we know nothing except what verse one tells us. She may be identical with Zipporah, more usually described as a Midianite [Ex. 2:16]; Habakkuk 3:7 and some Assyrian texts suggest the identity of Midian and Cush.”

(Harrison, Intro. OT) “Presumably his first wife Zipporah had died subsequent to being returned by Jethro to Moses [Ex.18:2], although this fact is nowhere stated in the text.

The term ‘Cushite’ is usually taken as the equivalent of ‘Ethiopian’, and as such the woman concerned may have left Egypt among the Israelites and their followers.”

(v. 1) “Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses....”

(Tyndale) “The text does not explain why Miriam and Aaron objected to this woman, because in reality their objections were only a smokescreen for their challenge to Moses’ spiritual authority”

(NIV App. Com) “Miriam and Aaron are irritated at Moses’ non-Israelite wife, but this is only the outer symptom of a deeper grievance: they feel that Moses is unduly dominating their prophetic triumvirate [v.2]



²So they said, “Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?” And the Lord heard *it*.

³(Now the man Moses *was* very humble, more than all men who *were* on the face of the earth.)

(Und. Bible Com. Series)

“Moses sister Miriam is seen in leadership role during the departure from Egypt [Ex. 15] and is also traditionally identified as the unnamed older sister who watches over the baby Moses floating on the river in in Exodus 2.”

v. 2 “Has He not spoken through us also?”

(Tyndale) “Miriam and Aaron claim that the Lord speaks with them in the same intimate way that he speaks with Moses. *Speak with* is a better rendering of the Hebrew, *dibber be*, than *Speak through*”

v. 3 “Moses was very humble” —in parenthesis...probably put in by a later editor to put the challenge to Moses’ authority in perspective

(Und. Bible Com. Series)

“here it probably indicates Moses’ discipline, integrity, trust and dedication in relationship with God.....the complaints of Miriam and Aaron are contrasted to Moses’ qualities”

⁴Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!” So the three came out.

⁵Then the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud and stood *in* the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward.

⁶Then He said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, *I*, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.

⁷ Not so with My servant Moses; He *is* faithful in all My house.

⁸ I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?”

(Und. Bible Com. Series) “The divine response in poetic form, is in verses 6-8. The speech affirms the validity of prophecy, but the revelation comes in visions and dreams. In contrast, Moses as God’s faithful servant receives direct and clear revelation.”

v. 8 “I speak to him face to face”

(Tyndale) “That is not to say he saw God directly and unveiled. The word form *temuna*, is used of visual representations, pictures or images, of earthly and heavenly beings.

Thus, although Moses enjoyed a much closer relationship with God than any ordinary prophet, he saw only God’s form, not the very being of God”

“he sees the form” [Ex. 33:23]

⁹So the anger of the Lord was aroused against them, and He departed.

¹⁰And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam *became* leprous, as *white as* snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper.

¹¹So Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord! Please do not lay *this* sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned.

¹²Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother’s womb!”

v. 10 Only Miriam is punished which suggest that she was the primary complainer going back to verse one

‘leprous’ (Heb.) *saraat*= skin disease—Miriam’s is the first biblical case of skin disease as a divine punishment

v.11 Aaron assumed Moses was angry and implores Moses to forgive her and for healing....

But Moses will ask God to heal her [v. 13]

¹³So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, “Please heal her, O God, I pray!”

¹⁴Then the Lord said to Moses, “If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received *again.*”

¹⁵So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in *again.*

(NIV App. Com.) “It is ironic that Aaron and Miriam, who are supposed to be prophets, are utterly dependent on the intercession of Moses”

v. 14 (New Int. Com. OT) “if Miriam’s father shown some unspecified contempt for her by spitting in her face, she would be held in a public state of humiliation for seven days....Numbers 5: 2-4 underlines the holiness of the camp. Unclean person must be put out.”

v. 15 (New Int. Com. OT) “The seven days can be thought of as a short period during which time Miriam’s ‘leprosy’ could be cleansed and she could atone for her crime”

16 And afterward the people moved from Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran.



Wilderness of Paran

Hazeroth

Lessons

After only 3 days journey the people complained—which after depending upon God for a year at Sinai, this complaining was a rebellious refusal to trust in him

We can do something positive by taking our problems to God in prayer, in belief that he will hear us and help (Psalm 142: 1-3)

Moses, in a show of his humanity, doubted that God could provide meat for a month for the people when they demanded meat

God's response was: "Has the Lord's arm been shortened?"

- He sent vast numbers of quail across the camp

There is no limiting the power of God