

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM NUMBERS

"Edom, Hor, Hormah"

Num. 20:14-21:3

The O.T. - It happened!

### JUST LEARNED

1. Numbers is the Book of the wilderness. God has a lot for Israel to learn out in the desert. Num. 20:1-13 list four items: a. God never goes back on His word (v. 1). 2. God is full of patience in the face of complaints (vv. 2-6). 3. God works through His servants (vv. 2-11). 4. God always vindicates His holiness (vv. 12-13). What fabulous lessons!

2. This wonderful God is awesome. He keeps on working with Israel in the wilderness. Follow Him and you will learn more of His ways and acts. The historical facts yield three tremendous affirmations.

#### 1. EXPECT OPPOSITION TO PROGRESS 20:14-22

This statement focuses on the negotiations between Israel and Edom.

##### a. Israel's appeal vv. 14-17, 19

The bases of appeal are clear and direct. In fact, there is no small emotion involved here.

Israel notes a common kinship (v. 14). This is obviously true (cf. Gen. 25:21-26; 36:1; Amos 1:11, Obad. 10, 12). They pleaded their troubles (vv. 14, 15). Words such as travail, befallen, Egypt, long time, vexed are emotionally fraught. There is deep down burden here.

But God was gracious to Israel and they hoped Edom would be also. Again there are words of significance here: we cried, God heard, He sent, brought us forth, and behold we are here.

Israel's request follows the outline of a diplomatic letter and concludes with the specific request itself (vv. 17). It is repeated twice (cf. v. 19).

Consider: Israel indicates peaceful intentions, assures against plunder, gives Divine approval of deliverance from Egypt, and desires to use an established trade route. Everything seemed in order.

##### b. Edom's denial vv. 18, 20, 21

Twice Edom refused. Indeed she raised an army to enforce her denial (v. 20).

NOTE: To this opposition Israel turned away. She knew her progress was opposed. She chose not to fight and elected to proceed another way. This is a great lesson (cf. Deut. 2:4, 5). Consider this:  
1. Don't expect Edomites to facilitate your prayers with the Lord. 2. There is a lot of spiritual

education Israel gained by continuing in the wilderness enroute to Canaan. The same is true of us! Remember: opposition to progress is not necessarily defeat, but pedagogy!

## 2. EXPECT RECOGNITION OF DISPENSABILITY 20:22-29

This dictum focuses on the death of Aaron.

### a. Prediction of Aaron's death vv. 22-26

The death of Aaron was inevitable (vv. 12, 24).

What a contrast with earlier accounts of him (Ex. 7; 24; 32; Lev. 8-10).

The basic facts are given here, but more later on (33:38, 39). It is sad that Aaron had been a "rebel" at Meribah (vv. 12, 13, 24).

### b. Reaction to Aaron's death vv. 22-29

God's plan is obvious--replacement of Aaron with Eleazar. Interestingly, the only time Aaron's robes were removed is mentioned concerning the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:4, 23).

Aaron was gathered to his people, a phrase used to describe the death of a righteous person (cf. Gen. 25:8, 7; 35:29; 49:33; Num. 31:2; see also "sleeping with one's fathers" in Judges 2:10; 1 Kings 1:21; 14:31). The opposite is a mark of divine judgment (Jer. 8:2; 25:33; Eph. 29:5).

NOTE: Aaron's death teaches O.T. conviction of family reunion for believers (cf. 2 Sam. 12:13). It also points to the fact that Aaron missed the blessing of Canaan because of sin so God expects unquestioned obedience to His Word.

## 3. EXPECT DEVOTION FOR VICTORY 21:1-3

There was an abortive effort to enter Canaan at Hormah (14:45). Forty years later God gives a pledge to conquer Canaan by a victory at Hormah!

Note, Moses is not mentioned, but the people are (v. 2). Their vow seems to vindicate their cause as being God's. When Israel won a war it was for one of two reasons: 1) promise to fathers (Gen. 15:18-21; Ex. 3:8, 17) 2) judgment on pagans (Gen 15:16; Deut. 9:4).

Note: Israel really wanted to win and God gave the victory. Our spiritual success is in a real sense associated with our mind, under God, to win.

CONCLUSION Expect opposition; dispensability, and devotion to be integral ingredients of a believer's wilderness trek to Glory!