Numbers

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: antimediator 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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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