

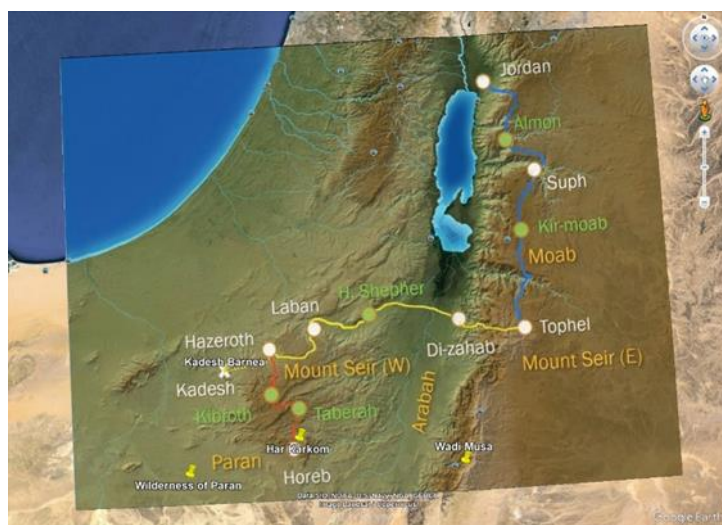
Verse 1:

Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the Lord spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days.



The above is one suggestion of the wanderings in the wilderness for “many days”. The second map though shows two alternative sites for Mount Seir.

The landscape in this region is the same though. Very barren, dry, hot, sandy and dusty, and not much fun. Some of the



names where they encamped tell the difficult time they had. The meanings are as follows:

- Rimmon-perez – pomegranate of the breach
- Libnah – whiteness
- Rissah – ruins
- Haradah – terror
- Tarah – a place beneath.
- Other names mean: son of the tortuous, hole of the cliff, servitude, sanctuary of the wandering son etc.

It wasn't all bad. Life has it's ups and well as downs:

Other place names:

- Kehelethah – congregation
- Shapher - goodliness
- Mithcar – sweetness
- Hashmonah – fertile
- Jotbatah – pleasantness

The journey in the wilderness wasn't meant to be a picnic! So more downs than ups perhaps. Though it didn't have to be that way. Life's decisions have consequences, and because of the stubbornness of human nature, we find we often suffer as a result of our own stupidity. Such experiences are necessary to shape us.

However Moses summed up this whole period of 38 years as:

... we compassed mount Seir many days.

A bit of an understatement! But now it was time to look forward. Severe trials are not something we do well to dwell on.

In this second reading of the law, Moses chooses to ignore many of the unhappier moments of the earlier generations' lives. Instead he focusses on aspects which could affect their future. In the following verses he emphasises relationships with surrounding nations and city states.

As they travelled into Canaan, this issue would be a lot more relevant than when they were wandering isolated in the wilderness.

In this chapter Moses reminds them that the nations would be afraid of them see verse 4 and verse 25 in particular. This was foretold many years before – see Exodus 15:14-16: 14 *The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.*

In fact, Israel as a nation had not done anything to instil this fear into the nations. They were not an aggressive people. It was an age of migration with many marauding tribes. Mass migration was not uncommon. But the belief and faith of the nation of Israel was unique. Their practices and customs were very different. It was this which caused the paranoid illogical aversion and fear, just as it does in people today towards those who respect the Word of God.

But we note Moses words in verse 4: ... *take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore:* It was their responsibility *not to give occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully* (1Tim. 5:14) It applies equally to today: Colossians 4:5: *Walk in wisdom toward them that are without,* ...see also Philippians 2:15.

Meddle not. Moses command in verse 5. Trade was permitted, but no more. They were not to look at their land in a covetous way. God knew all that they needed – (see Matthew 6:8 for our instruction) and gave them abundantly. The terrible price to pay for stealing what was not theirs is seen in the terrible example of Achan in Joshua 7.

Why interfere and meddle with what the world has, when what we have is far better? What the nation had in the wilderness was a

miracle they had clothes and shoes that never wore out!! See Nehemiah 9:21, and Deut 8:4. Meddle not. Moses uses this term a couple of times in this chapter (see verse 19) reminds us of Proverbs 26:17: *He that passes by, and meddles with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.* Rather stupid thing to do. Don't interfere and involve yourself with those who are not of the same persuasion.

The Hebrew word for meddle is *garah* and it means to "grate" and is translated as well as to strive, contend and to stir up. The disciples of Jesus are to do the opposite: Matthew 5: 39 *But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also...* 44 *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

Romans 12:18: *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

Despite all this effort, in not meddling and not causing distress with the children of Esau, and children of Lot – all the seed of Abraham, they were still accused of stealing their land! In Judges 11:12 – 18, Jephthah, the judge of Isarel made a brilliant defence of this part of the integrity of the nation of Israel, how they did not take away any part of the land of Edom and Moab. But despite this Edom and Moab and Ammon hated Isarel, and all through the history of the nation, there was this hatred even when the Idumean – Herod ruled over the land. All because of hatred which was borne from fear! So today, Israel hated by their Arab neighbours because of fear, and still accused of stealing their land!

Just as Israel received their inheritance by chasing out the squatters – the Canaanites. Well, eventually they did. The book of Joshua and Judges describes that they made an easy job difficult because they did not have enough faith.

In contrast, Moses tells us in this chapter 2 of Deuteronomy that the Moabites chased out the *Emims... a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakim*. (v 10) and the Edomites chased out the Horim (v12). The Caphtorim (Sea Peoples from the Aegean, also known as the Philistines) who were from Caphtor (ancient Crete) who chased out the Avim. The scripture does not record any of them having trouble chasing these people away. By contrast: Yet Israel struggled very much and feared greatly because of these same people (Deut 9:2)

Historians believe that these Anakim were the Hyksos, which may explain perhaps why Israel feared them so much, as they were once very influential in Egypt. Israel were in awe of them, describing them as giants (verse 11, 20) Hebrew: *Nephilim* meaning men of reputation and renown. But in this chapter the Ammonites had to contend with the Zamzummims (v20) who were so named (*mezazah* which means door post) because they were a very tall people. There is no record of there being any issue - *but the Lord destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead:*

Towards the end of this chapter we are reminded how the Amorites – Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan were living north of the east of Jordan – which they had captured from the Moabites, as that portion was originally given to the Moabites. These people were particularly nasty – and were spiteful to Israel attacking them when they requested passage through their land. In return God gave these people into the hand of Israel, and they destroyed them. They did this because of faith, when they obeyed God, they would succeed. Moses reminds them of this success to give them encouragement. He reminds them of how others had succeeded in chasing out evil clans and tribes, so they could do it to!

Daniel reminds us in 4:17 *the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

Brother Terry