

Conflicts and Conquests

Israel's challenges in Numbers 20 and 21

Overview

Numbers 20 and 21 relate the march of the people of Israel out of the wilderness. The journey is characterized by peculiar conflicts involving different characters, but one is outstanding – Yhwh, the holy one of Israel. Yhwh embodies the spirit and the consciousness of Israel as a nation. In him he is, with him he moves and only through him he can prosper. The adversity in the wilderness serves to instill this consciousness whereby Israel has not only to endure deaths but also to undergo a paradigm shift in lifestyle and leadership. Thus, the definitive events between Kadesh in Zin and Moab reveal that the fractured Israel must coalesce not even around Moses but around Yhwh.

Research Questions

- What does the conflict between Moses and Yhwh mean to Israel?
- What is the meaning of the death of elites and dissidents in Num 20 and 21?
- What is the meaning of Israel's conflict with other nations and Yhwh's involvement?

Research Objectives

- Exegetical and hermeneutical analysis of the text.
- Examination of aspects of its theology.
- Demonstration of the relevance of the text to a fractured society like Kenya.

Research Method

- Synchronic exegesis through narrative analysis.
- Textual criticism and intertextual analysis.



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