

Wilderness Timeline

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1445 2:x:x - 1407 40:5:1
38 Years Lost in the Wilderness
Dt2:14a

1445 2:2:20

The cloud lifts from the Tabernacle and the Israelites set out on the march towards the wilderness of Paran Nm10:11-12

2:4:x

Third Camp:
"wilderness of Paran"
 a.k.a "Kadesh", "Kadesh-barnea"; this is near the southern limit of Canaan, about 220 miles from Horeb Nm12:16,13:26, Dt1:2,19

2:6:x

The first Battle of Hormah: the people "repent" and attempt to invade Canaan, but without YHWH fighting for them, they are defeated Nm14:39-45, Dt1:41-45

"Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness in the direction of [Yam Suph], as the LORD told me. And for many days we traveled around Mount Seir." (Dt2:1 ESV) This sounds like moving west to east and east to west between the Sinai Peninsula and the wilderness to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba. The summary of campsites in Nm33:18-34 lists mostly unidentifiable locations for this period.

1407 40:5:1

The death of Aaron on Mount Hor in the area of Kadesh. Eleazar is inducted as High Priest. Nm20:22-28,33:38-39

40:6:x

Edom refuses Israel passage and attacks as they pass Nm20:14-21. They go down the west side of Edom towards Yam Suph Nm21:4a

At the north end of Yam Suph, Elath, YHWH tells Moses to go north via the pass of Ezion-geber avoiding the territory of Edom traveling to the east Dt2:2-8

Defeat of Sihon and Og: acquisition of lands east of the Jordan Nm21:21-35, Dt2:26-37,3:1-22

Census of the Wilderness Generation: all fighting men of the Exodus Generation are dead Nm26:1-65, Dt2:14b

40:11:1

Moses begins to "explain the torah" Dt1:3,5. The presentation and recording of the material we have in the Book of Deuteronomy seems to have taken about one month.

1406 41:1:10
 Joshua crosses the Jordan Jsh4:19

First Camp: Kibroth-hattaavah (about 60 miles); a.k.a. "Taberah" (burning); "the people" complain, YHWH burns parts of the camp; "the rabble" and "the people of Israel" complain about food, "quail" provided (for a month); a plague kills many Nm11:1-15,19-23,31-34

The spies are sent into Canaan; after 40 days they return with a negative report, except for Joshua and Caleb. "All the congregation" rebels and desires to return to Egypt. YHWH is prepared to wipe them all out, but Moses intercedes and YHWH acquiesces but pronounces the death penalty on all the men listed on the first census Nm1:2-46,13:1-33, 14:1-38, Dt1:19-35

A man is found working on the Sabbath. Moses and Aaron inquire of YHWH, who pronounces death by stoning Nm15:32-36

The budding of Aaron's rod: this is tied contextually to the rebellion, but there is again no indication when it occurred. The purpose of the object lesson is to unequivocally endorse the Aaronic Priesthood. Nm17:1-13

In the Wilderness of Zin, Kadesh, Miriam dies in the "first month", presumably of the last year, so 40:1:x Nm20:1,33:36

The second Battle of Hormah: during the mourning period for Aaron, the King of Arad attacked Israel. This time YHWH fought for Israel. Nm20:29, 21:1-3,33:40

"Fiery Serpents": again the people complain and are afflicted with poisonous snakes; Moses creates the bronze serpent, "Nehushtan" Nm21:4b-29, 2Kg18:4, Jh3:14

The nine camp sites along the way to the plains of Moab are listed in Nm21:10-20 and summarized in Nm33:44-49. There is no indication how long this took, but assuming 3 days per camp site, (Nm10:33) it would be about a month.

Joshua's qualifications: he was one of the original spies Nm13:8, 16, 14:6-10, 30, 38, 26:65, 32:12, Dt1:38. Joshua had been an assistant to Moses from the beginning Ex17:8-15, 24:12-13, 32:15-18, 33:11, Nm11:26-29

Death of Moses: the people mourned Moses for 30 days. Joshua gave the people three days notice before crossing Jordan, so 41:1:8 Jsh1:11. The latest Moses could have died is 40:12:7 Dt34:1-8

Second Camp: Hazeroth; Miriam and Aaron challenge Moses over his "Cushite" wife (NOT Zipporah) Nm11:35,12:1-15 See Rohl TT pages 310-318 and EE pages 184-187.

YHWH had told them to "turn and journey into the wilderness in the direction of Yam Suph" Dt1:40. Before doing this, they "remained at Kadesh many days" Dt1:46.

Rebellion of Korah, Nathan, and Abiram: this is the only major incident reported over the 38 year period. **There is no indication when it occurred.** Perhaps it is typical of other incidents. Perhaps it is a conflation of more than one incident. It clearly demonstrates why the exodus generation had to die in the wilderness. It makes clear that God was committed to his plan and would accomplish it through Moses. Nm16:1-50

Moses strikes the rock: this occurs during the last visit to Kadesh after the death of Miriam (Nm27:14, Dt32:51). **"Meribah"** means "quarreling" - it had been previously used for a location in the area of Horeb (Ex17:7). Moses and Aaron were no doubt beyond frustration with the people by this time, so Moses hit the rock rather than speaking to it, as YHWH had instructed. As a result, a death sentence was put on Moses and Aaron. Nm20:2-13

Events in the plains of Moab: Bile'am attempts to curse Israel. (Nm22:,23:,24:,25:) The people get involved with the worship of Ba'al of Peor - many died of plague Nm25:1-15. Daughters of Zelophehad petition for inheritance rights Nm27:1-11. At the command of YHWH, Phinehas takes vengeance on Midian Nm25:16-18,31:1-20

Rohl, D.M., *A Test of Time*, (TT), Random House, London, 1995
 Rohl, D.M., *From Eden to Exile*, (EE), Greenleaf Press, Leabannon Tennessee, 2009

Israel on the March: In the description of the camp in Numbers 2:1-30, the general order of the march is specified. The instructions for dismantling and carrying the Tabernacle are given in Numbers 4:1-49. When they actually set out, the Ark went first (Numbers 10:33), then the armed men of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, then Levites with the Tabernacle (the fence and the tent) followed by the armed men of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, then Levites with the Holy Things, then the rest of the armed men (Numbers 10:14-28). This would take many hours to accomplish. **There is no specification of where women, children, animals, and men who were non-combatants marched.** Most likely they followed the main group. The Ark would probably be at least a full day ahead of the last groups to leave camp. This is why it was necessary to march day and night following the cloud and the fire (Exodus 13:21-22, Numbers 10:33-36).

The Seventy Elders: At Kibroth-hattaavah Moses bewails his responsibility to care for Israel (Numbers 11:10-15), so YHWH instructs him to establish a leadership group of Seventy Elders (Numbers 11:16-30). In Deuteronomy 1:9-18 these individuals are called *shophet*, "governor", "judge". The idea was not new - in Exodus 18:13-27 Jehro/Reuel had advised Moses to select "judges" from the people to help him; and, in Exodus 24:1-10 a group of seventy elders was on the mountain with Moses. The difference is that in Numbers 11 YHWH distributes the Holy Spirit.

The time in the Wilderness: During this period Moses no doubt assembled the material we have in the first four books of the Pentateuch. YHWH would have continued to provide new revelation - the didactic material (e.g. statutes). Moses would have worked with his source material: the original documents of Genesis chapters one through thirty-six, the "Joseph" material (possibly oral), the Book of the Wars of YHWH, the Book of the Covenant, and the Book of Jasher.