

Week Ten

Days 64–70



Desert Wanderings Narrative: Numbers 15–22 |

Supplemental: Deuteronomy 13–23; Psalms 96–100, 102, 105

HOPE IS RENEWED AS GOD PROMISES A PROPHET



Moses Brings out Water from the Rock
by Bernardino Luini

Some Israelites continue to rebel against God's work even though they have been given the Law. Our readings include several rebellions against Moses and Aaron, along with the punishments God sends. The rebels include Levites, who had been granted the special privilege of being priests because of their prior faithfulness. Clearly, past faithfulness does not necessarily equate to future faithfulness. The opposite is also true: Those who defy God do not have to remain rebels. The reading from Numbers ends with the first part of the story concerning Balak and Balaam. It shows that there is only one God, and he is the Lord of all people, whether they acknowledge it or not.

- Tithing, a key commandment discussed in Deuteronomy, is not simply for worship but also to support the Levites, since they do not have their own land. Tithes also help widows, orphans, and strangers.
- These details help us understand how God sets the community in an organization of interdependence. This is God teaching the Israelites the importance of community, duty, and love.
- Rebels Dathan and Abiram resent God for bringing them out of Egypt. They have a false image of Egypt, as if slavery were better than the promises made regarding the Promised Land. They claim God wants to “kill them in the wilderness.”
- As a consequence of their disobedience, the Lord destroys the families of Korah, Abiram, and Dathan.
- Like the Israelites, we can believe we were happier in our past brokenness and bondage to sin, even as God leads us to true freedom.
- Laws and regulations are set forth in Deuteronomy, where we also find words of prophecy and promise.
- God promises to raise a prophet like Moses from among the people, a messianic prophecy of the coming of Jesus. Many prophets are like Moses, but Jesus is the only one who perfectly fulfills the role of prophet.
- Deuteronomy 20 says people must always be permitted to surrender in war—except for Canaanites.
- The Canaanites live violent, wicked lives. They sacrifice their children to a god. They have brought God's judgment upon themselves, which he will exact through Israel.

