NUMBERS 11: A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE

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A Pentecostal Perspectival Approach

Katharine Dood Sakenfeld has noted that Numbers 12 has attracted certain perspectival approaches ranging from gender[1] or feminist to race[2] or African ethnocentric readings.[3] In a similar manner it can be argued that Numbers 11 has often been read from a Pentecostal perspective. I would suggest that there are three modern Pentecostal readings of this chapter that have appeared in recent academic literature.

The first involves the attempt to establish an analogy between the experience of the elders in Num 11 with the Pentecostal experience of Spirit Baptism. Applying the temporary prophetic abilities of the

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[1]   Ursula Rapp, *Mirjam: Eine feministisch-rhetorische Lektüre der Mirjamtexte in der hebräischen Bibel*, BZAW 317 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 31-193; Rita J. Burns, *Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? A Study of the Biblical Portrait of Miriam*, SBLDS 84 (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987), 48-79; Phyllis Trible, "Subversive Justice: Tracing the Miriamic Traditions," in *Justice and the Holy: Essays in Honor of Walter Harrelson*, ed. D. Knight and P. Paris (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 99-109; Wilda C. Gafney, *Daughters of Miriam: Women Prophets of Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 76-85.

[2]   David Tuesday Adamo, "The African wife of Moses: an examination of Numbers 12:1-9," *ATJ* 18, no. 3 (1989), 230-237; David Tuesday Adamo, *Africa and the Africans in the Old Testament*, (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1998), 67-73; Jacqueline Ann Williams, "And She became 'snow white': Numbers 12:1-16," *OTE* 15, no. 1 (2002), 259-68.

[3]   See Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "New approaches to understanding and study of the Bible," in *The Bible in the twenty-first century*, ed. Howard Clark Kee (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1993), 131-37.

seventy elders, Wonsuk Ma notes that the

> . . . prophesying was perhaps one of the best phenomena
> which includes objectivity, demonstrability as well as its
> cultural acceptability among the Israelites. This visible
> demonstration of the spirit's presence was probably intended
> to provide an objective sign of God's authentication upon the
> seventy elders to the people.
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> The sign served not only the recipients, that is, the
> seventy, and Moses himself, but also the people to whom the
> seventy would eventually administer by assisting Moses. The
> election authenticated by the coming of the spirit (with the
> prophetic sign), in a sense provided God-given authority
> upon God's chosen sub-leaders in the presence of the people.
> Although in a less significant way, this reaffirmed the
> leadership authority of Moses when God affirmed his choice
> of the seventy.[4]

Ma has combined two themes: authentication of the leadership role
or office and the presence of a quantifiable sign[5] of the spirit's
presence. It is interesting to note that Roger Stronstad had argued back
in 1980 that Luke was influenced by two Old Testament charismatic
motifs: transfer motif and sign motif.[6] These basically align with Ma's
depiction. For Ma, the sign was a "behavioral display, rather than upon
any pronounced oracle."[7] This sign served two roles: "authentication

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[4]   Wonsuk Ma, "'If it is a Sign': An Old Testament Reflection on the Initial
Evidence discussion," *AJPS* 2, no. 2 (1999) 167. Note however that Benjamin
D. Sommer, "Reflecting on Moses: The Redaction of Numbers 11," *JBL* 118,
no. 4 (1999), 606 counters that, "the point of gathering them is not to introduce
them to the burden of leadership for the first time . . . . Rather, it is to allow
those who already share Moses' political burden to experience prophecy."

[5]   Ma is following Frank Macchia, "Groans too Deep for Words: Towards a
Theology of Tongues as Initial Evidence," *AJPS* 1, no. 2 (1998), 149-73, where
Macchai suggests the use of the term "sign" rather than "evidence."

[6]   Roger Stronstad, "The Influence of the Old Testament on the Charismatic
Theology of St. Luke," *Pneuma* 2, no. 1 (1980), 35-7. In Roger Stronstad,
Spirit, Scripture and Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective (Baguio City: APTS
Press, 1995), 154, he notes three: "1) transfer, 2) the sign, and 3) the vocation
motifs."

[7]   Ma, "'If it is a Sign'," 171.

and empowerment."[8] Ma further answers a self posed question of why prophesying was used by noting that "Prophesying, which is beyond the human realm in nature, thus provides a clear sign of divine control or possession. In that sense, this sign is more than a signpost. Rather, it contains certain elements of the reality to which it points."[9]

Roger Cotton has similarly argued that Num 11 was "the foundational Charismatic/Pentecostal passage in the Old Testament."[10] In fact "Numbers 11 strongly supports a concept of initial observable evidence of the empowering of a believer to fulfill God's purpose for him or her as a witness for the Lord."[11]

A second Pentecostal perspectival reading is strangely found among non-Pentecostals who have understood the ecstatic state of the prophesying elders as being some sort of glossolalia. Gordon Wenham for example writes that "the prophecy described here was probably an unintelligible ecstatic utterance, what the New Testament terms speaking in tongues, not the inspired, intelligible speech of the great Old Testament prophets . . . ."[12] His reading does not have any substantial support. However Nobuyoshi Kiuchi supports Wenham based on the supposed ecstatic nature of the Hithpael form of the verb נבא and concludes that "in the Old Testament, there is no one word that represents "glossolalia," however from the purpose and the behavior of the 72 elders' prophesy, we may speculate that they were speaking in tongues."[13] The theory that the form התנביא represents an ecstatic behavior on the part of the elders has been contested by many scholars. As early as 1979, Robert Wilson summarizes his study of the form by noting that

the use of the hithpael of *nb   suggests that this form was

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[8]   Ma, "'If it is a Sign'," 172.

[9]   Ma, "'If it is a Sign'," 173.

[10]   Roger D. Cotton, "The Pentecostal Significance of Numbers 11," *JPT* 10, no. 1 (2001), 3.

[11]   Cotton, "The Pentecostal," 8.

[12]   Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction & Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 109.

[13]   Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, "Prophesy as a Sign (Numbers 11:24-30) - A Biblical Theological Consideration," *Exegetica* 9 (1998), 10 [my translation from the Japanese].

indeed used to describe characteristic prophetic behavior. However, this behavior seems to have varied from group to group within Israel and also changed over the course of Israelite history. The term sometimes designated types of ecstatic or trance behavior, but this was not always the case. Increasingly the term was used to describe characteristic prophetic speech, until finally the hithpael of *nb   became synonymous with the niphal.[14]

Another scholar, Benjamin Uffenheimer also notes the diverse behavior that is associated with the Hithpael form. He writes, "the argument concerning the Hitpa'el form *hitnabbē* , which has been raised by scholars as evidence of prophetic madness, is untenable. The philological investigation into this form reveals that its semantic field covers all shades of meaning from "to behave enthusiastically" to "to be made" (1 Sam xviii 10) - the exact meaning in each case being determined by the context."[15]

It is in an article by John Levison that the strongest counter argument has been offered. Levison categorically denies the out of control frenzy portrayal of the Elders by: 1) denying that 1 Sam 10-19 is parallel to Num 11; 2) focusing on the verbs אצל and נוח rather than נבא; 3) and following a different sociological understanding of the role of ecstasy in society. He argues that the prophetic phenomena that the elders experienced was visionary.[16] Since Cotton[17] used the unique understanding of the Hithpael form of נבא as a crucial part of his argument and Ma interpreted Num 11 based on the texts of 1 Sam 10 and 19,[18] Levison's proposal destroys both the ecstatic-tongues reading and the sign/evidence element.

Roger Stronstad, provides a third read when he argues that Num 11.25-29 is the wellspring for the "doctrine of the prophethood of all

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[14]   Robert R. Wilson, "Prophecy and Ecstasy: A Reexamination," *JBL* 98, no. 3 (1979), 336.

[15]   Benjamin Uffenheimer, "Prophecy, Ecstasy, and Sympathy," *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 40 (1988), 263.

[16]   John R. Levison, "Prophecy in Ancient Israel: The Case of the Ecstatic Elders," *CBQ*, 65, no. 4 (2003), 503-21.

[17]   Cotton, "The Pentecostal," 7-8.

[18]   Ma, "'If it is a Sign'," 167-70.

believers,"[19] which was expanded in Joel 2.28-32 and followed in the Luke-Act tradition.[20] Num 12.6 is used as a bridge to Joel 2 with the mention of dreams and visions, however the Numbers pericope paints dreams and visions as subordinate forms of Yahweh's revelation in comparison to the direct revelation that Moses received.

Several important contextual preliminaries to exegesis and application that have not been taken into account by Pentecostals include the following observations. First, as Rolf Knierim has indicated, Exodus through Deuteronomy should be read as a biography of Moses. In Knierim's own words, "*the Pentateuch is not the story or history of Israel's beginnings but the story of the life of Moses which is fundamental for the beginnings of Israel's history; that it is the vita, or the biography of Moses*."[21] This implies that as in the immediate context of the subunit Num 10.11-14.45, Moses stands out as the main character. Even in Num 14.5-10, where it seems that Moses and Aaron have lost their leadership role to Joshua and Caleb, Yahweh turns the story back to Moses as the sole mediator for Israel in the rest of the chapter. A peek into this Moses-centric reading may be noted in Num 12.6-8, where prophets are recognized as revelatory agents of Yahweh, but are understood as secondary in quality to that which is mediated by Moses. Therefore when it comes to Num 11, even with an over emphasis on the prophesying elders, Eldad/Medad or Moses' wish that all of Yahweh's people were prophets and that they would have Yahweh's spirit on them (11.29b), the exegete should not be distracted from understanding it as ultimately Moses' story.

Second, Num 11 must not be exegeted without realizing that it has an immediate context of Num 10.11-14.45.[22] The Sinai event had come

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[19]   Roger Stronstad, "The Prophethood of all Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology," in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, ed. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies, JPTSup 11 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 61.

[20]   Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology*, JPTSup 16 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 75, 84.

[21]   Rolf P. Knierim, "The Composition of the Pentateuch," in *The Task of Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 372, the italics are Knierim's.

[22]   The LXX should be delimited as 10.1-14.45, because of several internal connections with the unit 10.11-36.

to an end and now the fully equipped Israelite people begin their travel into the wilderness toward the promised land. The ideal, which is described in chapter 10 is exposed to a series of conflicts in 11.1-3, 4-35; 12.1-16; 13.1-14.45. Analyzed from a narratological perspective,[23] 10.11-36 should be considered an exposition, laying the groundwork for the upcoming narrative. The subunits in 11.1-14.10a are a series of complications which will be altered in 14.10b by Yahweh's glory.[24] The following indictment, intercession and judgment in 14.11-38 bring closure to the collection of subunits. The exodus generation had been unfaithful to Yahweh and now will live out their lives in the wilderness without entering the promised land. The futile effort to force an entry in 14.39-45 concludes the larger unit. This contextual framework for Num 11 means that the chapter is part of a strong current that is flowing toward the grave sin of unbelief in chapters 13-14. Num 11 with the people's implied threat to return to Egypt[25] not only connects to this torrent, but also must be integrated into any analysis of the chapter.

Third, the two major plot-lines in Num 11 should not be exegeted in isolation. Scholars have traditionally isolated two story-lines; one dealing with the demand for meat that led to Yahweh providing quail and, a second dealing with Moses' complaint about shouldering the burden of leadership of the Israelites to which Yahweh provides 70 elders that prophesy.[26] However there are several *Leitwöter* that

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[23]   See Yairah Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 46-7.

[24]   Claus Westermann, "Die Herrlichkeit Gottes in der Priesterschrift," in *Wort, Gebot, Glaube: Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments Walther Eichrodt zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Hans J. Stoebe, AthANT 59 (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1970), 242. Westermann has observed that the appearance of the glory of Yahweh consistently occurs in the center of the glory of Yahweh narratives in Priestly literature.

[25]   For the importance of this theme in the Pentateuch and especially for Numbers 11 and 14, see F. V. Greiffenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map: Constructing Biblical Israel's Identity*, JSOTSup 361 (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 177-205.

[26]   The older standard source critical studies on Numbers 11 divide the text into two intertwining narratives from two different sources. Specifically J, represented by 11.4-15, 18-23, 31-35 and E with 11.1-3, 16-17, 24-30. See S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913), 62. However even the early source critical scholars seem to vary in detail. For example J. Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der Historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter,

indicate that the final form of the text is meant to be read together and not isolated.[27] Three specific words that bridge the supposed fissures of the two plot-lines include first of all, אסף√, which first appears in the word, אספסף and shows up in 11.16, 22, 24, 30, 32 (x2). The second is the נשא√ which also appears crossing the supposed plot-lines. It is found in Num 11.11, 12 (x2), 14, 17 (x3). Finally the אכל√ runs throughout the chapter: 11.1, 4, 5, 13, 18 (x2), 19, 21. This means that all implications that are derived from this chapter should be informed by both stories-line not just an isolated look at the prophesying elders or Moses' desire for a democratization of the prophetic. The approach of Cotton and especially Ma have failed to deal sufficiently with the interconnectedness of the two plot-lines. This can be noticed by the

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1963, vierte unveränderte auflage), 99, has the E material as 11.14-17 and 24b-29. The most radical is that of H. Seebass, "Num. XI, XII und die Hypothese des Yahwisten," *VT* 28 (1978), 214-223. See the summary on pages 219-20, where he divides the text into: a) the J source (establishment of the seventy) in 11.4a, bα, 10b-11, 14-16aα, b, 17, 24b-25a, 30, 33b-34; b) a pre-Deuteronomic source (the quail plague) in 11.4bβ, 10a, 12-13, 18aα, 19-20a, 21-23a, 24a, 31-33a; c) a Deuteronomic source (the people's revolt against Yahweh) in 11.5-9, 16aβ, 18aβ, b, 20b, 23b; d) a postexilic redaction (ecstatic prophecy of Eldad and Medad) in 11.25b-29. Volkmar Fritz, *Israel in der Wüste: Traditionsgeschichtliche untersuchung der Wüstenüberlieferung des Jahwisten* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert Verlag, 1970), 16-18, divides the sources into the E-source at 11.11, 12, 14-17, 24b-30, while the J-source is found in 11.4-6, 10, 13, 18-25a, 31-35. Aaron Schart, *Mose und Israel im Konflikt: Eine Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zu Wüstenerzählungen*, OBO 98 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 162-63 divides the text into a early J source focusing on the quail story with 11.4-6, 13, 18-24a, 31-35 and a D gloss in 11-12, 14-17, 24b-30. Benjamin Sommer, "Reflecting on Moses: The Redaction of Numbers 11," *JBL* 118, no. 4 (1999), 604, divides the chapter as 11.4-15, 18-24a, 31-35 and 11.16-17, 24b-30. Reinhard Achenbach, *Die Vollendung der Tora: Studien zur Redationsgeschichte des Numeribuches im Kontext von Hextateuch und Pentateuch*, BZABR 3 (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2003), 219-20, 266, provides a new redactional approach breaking the text in the followin manner: early quail narrative (Num 11.4bβ, 5, 6a, 13, 16aα, 18aα, 18b, 19, 20aα, 21-23, 31-32); a HexRed via the murmuring narrative (Num 11.1-3, 4a, 4bα, 6b, 10bα, 18abg, 18b, 20aβ, 20b, 33-35); a PentRed (Num 11.10a, 10bβ, 11-12, 14-15, 16aβ, 16b, 17, 24-30); while Num 11.7-9 is ThB.

27   See Pamela Tamarkin Reis, "Numbers XI: Seeing Moses Plain," *VT* 55, no. 2 (2005), 229-31, who argues along with A. Berlin that the "compositional and rhetorical features" of Num 11 argues against the redactional and source critical analysis of the pericope.

downplaying or total silence about the significant internal issues such as the "desire," "manna," "Moses' expostulation," "quail," "Eldad & Medad."[28]

Last but not least is the fact that the text of Num 11 is pluriform, having been preserved in multiple textual trajectories which are now represented by the Masoretic, Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint, with many interpretative additions present in the Targumim. The slow realization by the scholarly community,[29] that the manuscript finds in the Judean desert clearly indicate that there was a range of textual traditions in Judaism during the period of about 300 BCE to 100 CE[30] and that the early church developed in this context makes it imperative to interact with these texts. This is especially so for a Pentecostal perspective since the tradition has a proclivity towards repristination. Taking the pluriform nature of the text seriously would be inline with a first century understanding of the chapter.

An Analysis of Numbers 11

The usual exposition of Num 11 involves an isolation of not only 11.1-3 from the rest of the chapter, but also a lack of continuity with the prior materials in 10.11-36. It is better to recognize that the story of Num 11 has its initial exposition, with the descriptions of Moses and tribes of Israel being lead out from Mount Sinai on a 3 days journey into the wilderness.[31] A glimpse into Moses' family life (10.29-32) has been woven into the theme of the military/cultic march.[32] Family issues

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[28]   Conrad E. L'Heureux, "Numbers," *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 5, (London: 1990), 27 writes, "The acknowledgement of Eldad and Medad's prophetic charism by Moses against the objection of Joshua, serves to protect the independence of the prophetic office [perhaps a better phrase would be "prophetic *role*"] from those who would subject it to institutional control."

[29]   See Eugene Ulrich, "Our Sharper Focus on the Bible and Theology Thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls," *CBQ* 66, no. 1 (2004), 1-24.

[30]   See the recent volume Hanne von Weissenberg, Juha Pakkala and Marko Marttila, *Changes in Scripture: Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple*, BZAW 419 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

[31]   Fritz, *Wüste*, 68-70; John van Seters, *The Life of Moses* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 226-7; H. Seebass, *Numeri 10,11-22,1*, BKAT 4 (Düsseldorf: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003), 21.

[32]   Rolf P. Knierim and George W. Coats, *Numbers*, FOTL, vol. IV (Grand

reappear once again in Num 12 enclosing chapter 11 with the good and the bad of familiar relationships and political realities.

Num 11.1-3 is the prelude[33] to the upcoming murmuring story which begins in v. 4. It introduces a series of complications that will thwart Israel from reaching the goal of the promised land. Here, however the people are warned by a shocking "fire from Yahweh" which burns the outskirts of the encampment. But the warning did not have a lasting effect. Even before Israel moved to a new location,[34] a small segment of the population "desires a desire" (v. 4). The irony of the selfish demand for meat to eat35 right after a story about a consuming fire from Yahweh links the stories with the all too familiar *Leitwort*, אכל√, "to eat" or "to consume."

The countermemory36 of these people paint a picture of culinary opulence which does not align with the understanding of their slavery in Egypt as depicted in the book of Exodus. Nor does it align with recent research that indicates that the dietary triad of cereals, grape and olive products, with an emphasis on the grains, was the staple for the *hoi polloi* of the region.37 Although Yahweh had provided manna (vv. 7-9; Exod 16), the monotony caused the people to claim that their very souls were dried up (נפשנו יבשה). This colorful phrase was a hyperbole to emphasis their desire for dietary variety and a dislike of their present state so much so that they were weeping (v. 10a) within their family units to a point where both Moses and Yahweh will have to take action

Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 141.

[33] Erhard Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, BZAW 189 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), 135, calls it a "*Vorspiel*."

[34] Ludwig Schmidt, *Das vierte Buch Mose: Numeri 10,11-36,13* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 19-20.

[35] It is to be noted that a diet of meat was not normative for people in Egypt nor throughout the Mediterranean region. See Douglas Brewer, "Hunting, Animal Husbandry and Diet in Ancient Egypt," in *A History of the Animal World in Ancient Near East*, ed. Billie Jean Collins (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 438.

[36] Adriane Leveen, *Memory and Tradition in the Book of Numbers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 83.

[37] Peter Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13-17; J. F. Ross, "Food," *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 304-8. Nathan MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 47-52, 60-65.

(v. 10b).

In v. 18, Yahweh's understanding of the complaint is revealed, one which is already noted as causing Yahweh to be angry (v. 10b). The people's demand for meat comes from their claim that their lives were better off back in Egypt (טוב לנו במצרים). This may be taken as an implicit rejection of Yahweh's act of delivering the former slaves from their bondage. A similar sentiment surfaces in v. 20, where Moses presents Yahweh's message with a quote from the people: "Why did we ever leave Egypt?" Egypt reappears in chapter 14 when the majority report of the scouts cause the people to revolt against Moses' and Aaron's leadership. A return to Egypt is proposed along with an attempt to replace these leaders (14.1-4). This longer plot-line suggests that the cause for the accusations in Num 14.11 may have already been present in chapter 11. In Num 14 the people are accused of spurning and not believing in God. Here in 11.20, the term "rejected" (מאסתם) is used to describe the peoples' complaint. It was these very people that Moses astutely claimed were Yahweh's people and not his suckling infants (vv. 11b-12).38 In a similar manner and general literary context, Moses presents his wish as a counter to the banal desires of the people for meat. Grammatically the reading of v. 4b as "Who will give us meat to eat?" is questionable. I would argue that it should be translated instead as a wish or desire,39 therefore: "If only we had meat to eat!"40 The phrase would then be complemented by v. 29bα, where a similar interrogative phrase is used in an optative manner with the phrase: "if only all Yahweh's people were prophets." I suggest that the counter-balancing of these two desires is an important element in the narrative. Moses has a great and positive expectation of the people in spite of their carnal proclivities. If the people were all prophets and Yahweh gave his spirit to them, we would expect them to be able to receive

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38   n.b. the phrase כל־העם הזה in v. 12 should be sharply contrasted with יהוה כל־עם in v. 29.

39   P Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, trans. and rev. Muraoka (Rome: Susidia biblica, 2006), §163d, who states, "A wish is sometimes expressed by an exclamatory question"; Carl Brockelmann, *Hebräische Syntax* (Neukirchen: Neukirchner Verlag, 1956), §9; W. Gesenius, E. Kautzsch and E. A. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Backwell, 1910), §151a.

40   B. Jongeling, "L'expression *my ytn* dans l'ancien Testament," *VT* 24, no. 1 (1974), 40, has translated the phrase as "Ah! si quelqu'un nous donnait de la viande à manger!"

revelations from Yahweh directly, albeit limited compared to Moses (12.6-8). Furthermore, if the people could receive revelations from Yahweh, then Moses' burden would be reduced. Such a desire on the part of Moses, a virtual prophethood of all Israel, would be a great asset for their future. Paradoxically, it would mean that the people would also be culpable for their disloyalty to Yahweh since they would know better.

Ironically, Yahweh judges those who demanded meat as an alternative to the consistent gracious provision of manna with an overabundance of meat (vv. 18b-20a; 31-32). This was an act that was as large in scale as Moses' wish that all would be prophets. A further irony, and maybe the more pertinent one is that it was Moses who first introduced the subject of quantity in v. 13a with the question: "Where am I to get meat to give to all this people?" Once again in the late retort of v. 21, Moses brings up the quantity issue. The amount that is described here is now: one month worth of meat for 600,000 foot soldiers and more. The narrative allows Moses to further expostulate with Yahweh in a sardonic tone indicating that neither the slaughter of the livestock nor a successful fishing expedition would be sufficient (v. 22). The overabundance answers Moses' questions and indicates to him as well as to the people that Yahweh's arms are not too short to provide for them and that Yahweh will fulfill his words (v. 23).

The plot-line of the prophesying elders along with Moses' desire that "all Yahweh's people were prophets" is deeply woven into the desperately broken relationship between Yahweh and the people. It is this same relationship that Moses wanted to mend by the democratization of the prophetic. Moses' long expostulation with Yahweh is his attempt to build a bridge that brings the people back to Yahweh. Here it is important to grapple with how one understands Moses' seemingly harsh interaction with Yahweh. Michael Widmer, for example, argues that Moses allowed "personal anger and irritation to take over," because he was "overwhelmed by the complaints of the people."[41] I would, on the contrary, understand Moses' daring expostulation as a bold act of intercession, one which George Coats has labeled a "loyal opposition."[42] There is no textual evidence to suggest

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[41]   Widmer, *Moses, God, and the Dynamics of Intercessory Prayer: A Study of Exodus 32-34 and Numbers 13-14*, FAT 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 298.

[42]   George Coats, "The King's Loyal Opposition: Obedience and Authority in Exodus 32-34," in *The Moses Tradition*, JSOTSup 161 (Sheffield: Sheffield

that Moses had done anything wrong in his strong verbal sparing with Yahweh. In v. 15, which is the climax to this section of Moses' intercession for the people, he concludes with an either/or challenge. "Help me or just kill me," is his ultimate plea. The parenthetical phrase, "if I have found favor in your sight," a phrase that Moses has used before in his intercession for the Israelites,43 gives evidence that he is forcefully bringing his request to a temporary conclusion.

11.17	11.25
aα - Then I will descend and speak with you there aβ - and I will take some of the spirit which is on you aγ - and I will put it on them;	aα - Then Yahweh descended in a cloud and spoke with him aβ - and he took some of the spirit which was on him aγ - and he put it on the seventy men, the elders
bα - and they will bear the burden of the people with you bβ - so that you will not bear it alone.	bα - and when the spirit rested on them, bβ - they prophesied but did not continue.

The elders that Yahweh has requested Moses to assemble are a direct answer to Moses' request that he would not have to shoulder the burden of the people alone (vv. 14, 17b). These elders were "those called" or "elected" by the community as indicated in the passive understanding of both the Qere and Kethib reading of this verse.44 They are therefore a positive representation of the people of Israel. They are transformed by receiving a portion of the spirit (רוח) that was on Moses. The tendency of the Pentecostal perspectival reading is to presuppose that the reference to the spirit here is part of an empowering רוח יהוה/אלהים tradition, however I would argue against such

Academic Press, 1993), 57-75.

43   Exod 33,12, 13(x2), 16, 17; 34.9.

44   See Diether Kellermann, *Die Priesterschrift von Numeri 1.1 bis 10.10* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), 6-7 and David Hymes, "Heroic Leadership in the Wilderness, Part 1," *AJPS* 9, no. 2 (2006), 303-4.

interpretation.45 Vv. 17 and 25 are crucial in determining the meaning of רוח here.

V. 25 is presented as the fulfillment of v. 17. Therefore v. 17aα, aβ and aγ align with v. 25aα, aβ and aγ. It is with 17bα-β and 25bα-β that the verses provide an interpretative crux: "and they will bear the burden of the people with you so that you will not bear it alone" (v. 17bα-β); "and when the spirit rested on them they prophesied but did not continue" (v. 25bα-β). So the רוח resting on them is parallel to the burden of sustaining the people. This suggests that the רוח is the gifting or more contextually, the responsibility to lead the people by shouldering them.46 Furthermore, as the elders would relieve Moses from his singular task of sustaining the people, so they also glimpse the prophetic office of Moses by prophesying in one anomalous event (יספו ולא ויתנבאו).

Two further examples of a unique use of רוח and the leadership roles can be observed in the depiction of Caleb and Joshua in the book of Numbers. In Num 14.24, Caleb is called by Yahweh as "my servant" (עבדי), a title only attributed in the book of Numbers to Moses (12.7) with a strong leadership implication.47 Furthermore he will uniquely be granted entrance into the promised land over against others of his generation because "he has a different spirit within him" and "he has followed me fully." The "different spirit within him" (רוח אחרת עמו) explicitly contrasts him with the other Israelites. Most interestingly, there is no biblical evidence that he received this spirit at any specific time. Caleb's spirit here is something that he possessed before the crisis

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45   Pentecostal and Charismatic Old Testament scholars have tended to overemphasize the importance of the noun רוח and have distorted their studies by artificially isolating certain uses of the term while neglecting the full semantic field. The 14 usages of רוח in the book of Numbers varies widely including an attitude of jealously (5.14 (x2), 30), divine empowerment to prophesy (11.29, 24.2), wind (Num 11.31), divine gifting (11.17, 25 (x2), 26), an attitude of faith or courage (14.24), leadership capacity (27.18), and an immaterial aspect of "all flesh" (16.22; 27.16).

46   See Ze'ev Weisman, "The Personal Spirit as Imparting Authority," *ZAW* 93, no. 2 (1981), 231, who notes that "the spirit that is conveyed to them from the spirit that is on Moses is meant to have them partake of Moses' authority while also subjecting them to it in a sacred ceremony in which the main performer is God himself."

47   Seebass, *Numeri*, 120, notes that "Kaleb heißt hier ganz singulär Gottes Knecht."

of Num 13-14 and is not understood as temporary. It is just who he is. Since the phrase is in parallel with "he has followed me fully," one which has military overtones, it may be best to consider it a personal trait such as courage or boldness in battle.48

In Num 27.18 it is Joshua who is said to "have a spirit in him" (בו רוח). One may be tempted to translate the רוח here as courageousness or boldness in battle as in the case of Caleb, since Joshua often appears in such military contexts. However, Num 27 is slightly different. Here, the narrative is concerned with Joshua's commissioning as the one who would lead Israel in general.49 In the parallel account of Deut 34, Joshua is said to be "filled with the spirit of wisdom" (v. 9, רוח חכמה מלא).50 Although this has been read as implying that the laying on of Moses' hands caused Joshua to be filled with the spirit of wisdom, it is better to understand the particle כי as "introducing a strong emphatic statement"51 combining the act of laying on of hands and the obedience of the congregation to Joshua. Now the two texts are in harmony and indicate that Joshua was chosen due to the רוח that he already had. Here then as in Caleb's case, Joshua is chosen because of his spirit, an aspect of his person that was present before Moses laid his

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48   Martin Rose, *Deuteronomist und Jahwist: Untersuchungen zu den Berührungspunkten beider Literaturwerke*, AThANT 67 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1981), 265-66. See also Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 78, who notes that the phrase is "found only in connection with Caleb and . . . reflects the original formulation of the grant tradition of Caleb."

49   Itamar Kislev, "The Investiture of Joshua (Numbers 27:12-23) and the Dispute on the Form of the Leadership of *Yehud*," *VT* 59, no. 3 (2009), 429-44, argues that v. 19, which has Joshua secondary to Eleazar is a secondary redaction to the text, added in the Persian period. I would agree with this suggestion.

50   See J. Roy Porter, "The Succession of Joshua," in *Proclamation and Presence: Old Testament Essays in Honour of Gwynne Henton Davies*, ed. John Durham and J. R. Porter (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983), 128.

51   Although many translations of Deut 24.9 imply that Joshua received the spirit of wisdom after Moses laid his hands on him, implying contradiction between this text and Num 27.18, Vogels has proffered a simple solution. He breaks the sentence up and reads: "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom. When (or Since) Moses had laid his hands upon him, the people of Israel obeyed him . . . ." See Walter Vogels, "The Spirit of Joshua and the Laying on of Hands by Moses," *LTP* 38, no. 1 (1982), 7.

hands on him. The term רוח was introduced in Num 27 as part of Moses' request for a successor in v. 16: "May Yahweh, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a person over the congregation." If the concept of the רוח in these verses are related, the phrase "spirits of all flesh" is instructive. Although Joshua's רוח is obviously from Yahweh, it is related to a larger concept of "spirits of all flesh," rather than emphasizing a charismatic gifting.[52] As Mattingly correctly notes "YHWH knows who Joshua is and can guarantee Moses that Joshua possess the requisite spiritual qualifications and skills for leadership."[53] It is difficult to be more precise.

The spirit on Moses in Num 11 that is distributed to the elders is similar in that it can be said to be Moses' and yet ultimately Yahweh's. The use of רוח in v. 31 of chapter 11 is quite different. It refers to the wind that carries the unexpected overabundance of meat. But contextually, the paralleling of the רוח of Moses, the רוח of Yahweh desired to be placed on all the people and the רוח that drives the quail toward the Israelite encampment is significant. An aligning of Moses' רוח and its effect on the elders is ironically twisted, with the hope-for prophetic activity of the people being put aside to meet their demand for meat.

A quick comparison of the characterizations of Moses, the seventy elders along with Eldad and Medad, and the people in general is helpful to clarify the meaning of Num 11. Beginning with the people in general (עם),[54] it is to be noted that stress is placed on their importance for the understanding of the chapter since out of the 87 occurrences of this noun in the book of Numbers, 20 are found in this chapter. They are portrayed negatively in vv. 11, 12, 13 and 14 as can be argued by the

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[52] Contra Vogels, "The Spirit of Joshua," 6 and Leon Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 49-50. I also do not agree with Keith Mattingly, "The Significance of Joshua's reception of the Laying on of Hands in Numbers 27:12-23," *AUSS* 39, no. 2 (2001), 196, who argues that the text implies that the spirit is both indicative of Joshua being a spirited individual and having God's spirit.

[53] Mattingly, "The Significance," 196.

[54] עם occurs in the following verses: 11.1, 2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 24, 29, 32, 33 (x2), 34, 35. Note that there is only one anomalous occurrence of בני ישראל (11.4) in the chapter. For a study of the term in both its biblical and West Semitic context, see Robert McClive Good, *The Sheep of His Pasture: A Study of the Hebrew Noun ☎○(m) and Its Semitic Cognates*, HSM 29 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1983), 13-42, 141-8.

use of the phrase "all this people" (כל-העם הזה). In fact this negative image characterizes the people throughout the chapter, especially in the quail narrative. However with the phrase "all the people of Yahweh" (כל-עם יהוה) in v. 29 a strong positive note is struck in close proximity to the phrase "his spirit" (רוחו). Furthermore when the seventy elders are introduced they are identified as "elders of the people" (זקני העם) in v. 16a, indicating that the people were a legitimate organization, like the "congregation" (עדה),55 that could elect their own eldership. Therefore the people are a legitimate legal body that has angered Yahweh and Moses (v. 10) and therefore portrayed negatively in their desire for meat (vv. 13, 18-20a) and their countermemory of Egypt (vv. 5, 18, 20).

Within this chapter, however, the elders are intended to be contrasted with the general depiction of the people. They appear, as Martin Rose notes, the "representatives of the people,"56 but they are positive representations. They are most likely not intended to introduce a new social-administrative institution as in Exod 18.12-27,57 but rather a contextually bound assistance to Moses.58 Their reception of the רוח of Moses and Moses' wish that all the people were prophets and

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55   See Hymes, "Heroic Leadership in the Wilderness, Part 1," 297-300; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings*, ConBOT 8 (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1976), 107-30; Jacob Milgrom, "Priestly Terminology and the Political and Social Structure of Pre-Monarchic Israel," *JQR* 69 (1978), 70, 75; E. Lipiński, "עַם ⅁Ο," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. XI, ed. G. Johnnes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 174; Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 B.C.E.* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979), 242.

56   Rose, *Deuteronomist und Jahwist*, 243, "bleiben Repräsentanten des Volkes." See also Frank Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law*, trans. Allan W. Mahnke (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 90, who writes, "as in Ex. 24:1, 9 . . . the seventy elders are representatives of the people as a whole."

57   Contra Stephen L. Cook, "The Tradition of Mosaic Judges: Past Approaches and New Direction," in *On the Way to Nineveh: Studies in Honor of George M. Landes*, ed. Stephen L. Cook and S. C. Winters (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 291.

58   See Shigehiro Nagano, "The Elders of Israel in Exodus 24.9-11," *AJBI* 19 (1993), 18, where he argues for the connection of Exod 24.9-11 with Ezek 8.11 and Num 11.16f.

thereby receive Yahweh's spirit should be understood as dovetailing. In this case being receptive to Yahweh would lighten Moses' burden and at the same time the people as a whole would receive Yahweh's provision of manna with gratitude. By this means the predilection of the people to look toward Egypt would be thwarted.

In contrast to the characterization of the people and the elders, Moses is the crux throughout the pericope. He is the individual who ties together the two major plot-lines, the quail and prophesying elders narratives. It is Moses' intercession before Yahweh, both in an almost super-mundane form in v. 2 and in a heated, vociferous interchange in vv. 11-15, and 21-22 that is the binding element throughout the chapter itself. The consistent theme of Yahweh as the provider of sustenance for the people59 is supported by Moses' intercessory activity. I understand the extreme language of Moses' intercession to be a use of hyperbole as a rhetorical device to persuade Yahweh and not a failure on his part.

The presence of Eldad and Medad in the narrative, along with Moses' attitude toward them (vv. 26-29) supports my argument that Moses is not being portrayed as failing or out of control. Once again with a certain narratological irony Moses does not stop them from prophesying as Joshua demand (v. 28, אדני משה כלאם), while the elders did not continue in their prophesying (v. 25). The fact is that Moses' gracious attitude toward them is in line with his desire for the people to be prophets.

Lastly, it needs to be noted that the concept of prophesying by the elders, including Eldad and Medad, and Moses' wish for a democratization of prophesy is clarified in Num 12.60 Although

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59   See L. Juliana M. Claassens, "The God Who Feeds: A Feminist-Theological Analysis of Key Pentateuchal and Intertestamental Texts" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 2001), 66-78, 79-98, who understand the dual image of manna and nursing as a metophor of God's nature and care along with teaching and learning; Rolf P. Knierim, "Food, Land, and Justice," in *The Task of Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 230-32. However, Diane M. Sharon, "The Literary Function of Eating and Drinking in Hebrew Bible Narrative with reference to the Literature of the Ancient Near East" (Ph.D. diss., The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1995), 83, 113-14, understands the eating motif here as a divine reassurance.

60   See T. C. Römer, "Nombres 11-12 et la question d'une rédaction deutéronomique dans le Pentateuque," in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Literature* (Louvain: Leuven University Press / Peeters, 1997), 492-95, who argues that 12.2-9 was an early response to Num 11 and its pro-prophetic

Yahweh may speak to/through prophets, Moses is unique in his relationship to Yahweh. He is Yahweh's servant, the one considered "faithful in all" Yahweh's household (12.7). This contextual observation further ensures that a Moses-centric interpretation of Num 11 is necessary.

One more observation about Num 12 is instructive. Although the noun "prophet" does occur in the chapter, it only appears once (12.6). Instead the chapter uses the phrase דבר . . . ב "speaks to/against" in uniting the first part of the pericope.61 The phrase focuses more intently on the concept of the reception of divine revelation and communication with Yahweh rather than prophetic utterances *per se*.

So what is the significance of Num 11? At least in the form of the text that developed into the Masoretic tradition, we may argue that the murmuring and complaints of the people concerning food endangered their progress to the promised land. The problem was so acute that signs of returning to Egypt, which would have meant a complete rejection of Yahweh's deliverance, were evident. In this context Moses interceded on their behalf, an intercession that was both rhetorically charged with *pathos* and yet an expression of his loyalty to both Yahweh and his work in leading the people.

The noun רוח, which is of great Pentecostal interest, is one of the main threads, along with Moses himself, that weaves the story lines together. רוח is involved in burden bearing. רוח is involved in making one a prophet. רוח is part of Moses. רוח is from Yahweh. רוח brings the quail. The overall meaning of the text is violated by attaching רוח solely to the appointment of the seventy elders with an implication that their prophesying is a sign of their initiation to eldership. This is especially so since their eldership is only related to this narrative alone. On the other hand a reading that isolates an understanding of the chapter as promoting a prophethood of the people misses the significance of Num 12 and its clarification of such democratization of prophesy.

The Septuagint reading of Num 11 is slightly different. In contrast to the Masoretic tradition which places the culpability on the people in general, the Septuagint has placed the blame squarely on the shoulders

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stance. Also T. C. Römer, "Israel's sojourn in the wilderness and the construction of the Book of Numbers," in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 428, 436-41.

61　Römer, "Nombres 11-12," 492.

of the ἐπίμικτος in 11.4. In the Masoretic tradition a *hapax legomenon* אספסף appears which is almost impossible to translated. Baruch Levine has noted that this noun derives from a "reduplicative form of the verb -s-p 'to gather in,'"[62] which is found repeatedly throughout Num 11. The *Targum Onkelos* has וברבין which mimics the reduplication. Levine has proposed an interesting possibility that he himself does not follow: "The verb *asap* often connotes the assembling of fighting forces (1 Sam 17:11). So it remains unclear whether reference here is to auxiliary fighting forces, or to camp followers and other non-Israelite hangers-on."[63] It is important to note that in Num 10.25 the root appears in the Piel participle form, which is understood as meaning "rear guard." Joshua 6.9, 13 exhibits this same usage. Num 10.25 has the tribe of Dan as this rear guard. In the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, the tribe of Dan is identified as those who had to be destroyed because they had an idol in 11.1. However in 11.4, the *Pseudo-Jonathan* text has the reading: ניורייא, "strangers," or "proselytes."[64] This would mean that the translator/s of *Pseudo-Jonathan* must not have connected the subunits: 11.1-3 and 11.4-35.

There is insufficient evidence to conclude that אספסף identifies some sort of military élite within this chapter. In fact, the Masoretic version of this chapter is thin on martial allusions in general. The fact that the root is found in the pericope six other times evidences an aesthetic proclivity that is found in other *Leitwörter* in the chapter and may have been used as an ironic counterpart to the elders that were gathered.

The Septuagint translation with the full phrase ὁ ἐπίμικτος ὁ ἐν αὐτοῖς "the mixture who were among them,"65 is an attempt to deal with the difficult term. Dorival understands that the Septuagint uses

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62   Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1-20, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 320. See also David J. A. Clines, ed., *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, vol. 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 350, cites 4Qcat[a] 7.5 as reading, "אנשי בליעל וכול האספסוף *men of Belial and all the rabble*."

63   Levine, *Numbers 1-20*, 320-1.

64   Ernest G. Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Numbers*, ArBib 4 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 217, has noted a parallel meaning in *Sifre Num*. II, 84.

65   Aquila has συνειλεγμένοι = crowd together, things bound together and the Theodotion has ὁ ἐπισυστρέφων = collect together - See Num 16.42 (17.7).

ἐπίμικτος to connect the Num 11.4-35 pericope with the Exod 12 account where the term is used to translate the phrase "large mixture" (ערב רב = ἐπίμικτος πολὺς). This group is distinguished in Exod 12.37-38 from three other groups: the 600,000 foot soldiers, the general company and the animals.[66] Staffan Olofsson uses the term "associative translation," which he argues is "where the choice of a corresponding word or phrase is dependent on renderings in similar passages,"[67] to describe this phenomenon. This clear case of intertextuality colors the pericope as a whole. Wevers identifies the issue best when he observes that, "by this interpretation, the responsibility for the revolt is put on the shoulders of the hangers-on, rather than on the Israelites themselves. There is a certain irony in this reliance on the Exodus passage, since the same passage lists not only the "large mixture" as traveling with the Israelites, but also πρόβατα καὶ Βόες καὶ κτήνη πολλά σφόδρα."[68]

The significance of blaming the mixed group is difficult to ascertain. Was there a group of individuals in the diasporean communities that could be identified as a mixed group that the translators saw as problematic? These may have been those who were being integrated too readily into the surround non-Jewish communities. Another suggestion is that the translators were attempting to soften the impression that the Lord was punishing unfairly a wide array of Israelites and that by specifying the offenders or at least the initiators of the offense, the punishment could be understood as falling specifically on them. A careful differentiation of blame, punishment and those who would be saved is also seen in the Septuagint reading of Num 14.23.[69]

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[66]   Gilles Dorival, *La Bible D'Alexandrie: Les Nombres* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1994), 287.

[67]   Staffan Olofsson, "The Septuagint and Earlier Jewish Interpretative Tradition," *SJOT* 10, no. 2 (1996), 206.

[68]   John Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Numbers*, SBLSCS 46 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 161-62.

[69]   See the studies of Hans Ausloos, "LXX Num 14:23: Once More a "Deuteronomist" at Work?" in *X. Congress of the International Organisation for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Oslo, 1998*, SBLSCS 51 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 415-427 and Michaël N. van der Meer, "The Next Generation: Textual moves in Numbers 14,23 and related passages," in *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers*, ed. Thomas Römer, BETL 215 (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2008), 399-416.

Another distinctive reading of the Septuagint tradition is found in the fact that it has interlaced the two major plot lines in a unique way. This is done by slightly altering the perspective on the people as noted in Moses' query of Num 11.11. Although the term "burden" (משׂא) is rather common, the Septuagint has chosen to translate it with the rare noun ὁρμή. Liddell and Scott divided the term into three fields: 1) "rapid motion forwards, onrush, onset, assault"; 2) "impulse to do a thing, effort"; 3) "setting oneself in motion, start on a march".70 Flint and Wevers have translated the word as "onslaught,"71 following the first definition of Liddell and Scott. However, Dorival has correctly followed the second definition with his translation "the impetus/impulse of (these) people,"72 which fits better into the present context. Therefore I would translate Moses' dialogue as follows: "Why have you mistreated your attendant and why have I not found grace before you, to put the impulse of this people on me?" The word appears again in Num 11.17 which I would also translate: "And I will come down and speak there with you and I will remove some of the spirit that is on you and place it on them and they shall help with the impulse of the people and you will not carry them alone." The Greek may be making a distinction between the immediate crisis deriving from the complaint and that of the regular leadership role of Moses. This "impulse" connects more closely with the complaint that was first mentioned in 11.4 as "craved a craving" (ἐπεθύμησαν ἐπιθυμίαν) and then closed off the pericope in 11.34, 35 (see also Num 33.16, 17), which was incited by the dissident group, i.e., the "mixture." So both the Septuagint and the Masoretic traditions have attempted to bring together the two plot lines, but they did it in their own distinct ways. The Septuagint laced the stories together from a negative perspective, focusing on the inappropriate craving. At the same time it was the mixed group that was the responsible party.

The textual tradition that eventually was used by the Samaritans was one of the standard Hebrew texts during the period of about 300 B.C. to 100 C.E. The more important witnesses of this textual grouping

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70   H. G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. with revised supplement (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1253.

71   Peter W. Flint, "Numbers," in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 120; Wevers, *Numbers*, 165.

72   Dorival, *Les Nombres*, 290, 292, i.e. "l'élan de (ce) peuple."

from the Judeaen desert manuscripts such as 4QpaleoEx[m], 4QNum[b], and 4QDeut[n] give evidence to a fuller vocalization by vowel letters, grammatical emendations, unique paragraph divisions (*qissim*) and several characteristic expansions that appear in the later Samaritan Pentateuch. The Samaritan Pentateuch of Num 11 does not have any of its characteristic interpolations and therefore tends to follow the Masoretic tradition closely, with only minor alterations.[73] There are however, a few exegetically noteworthy differences. First, the characterization of Moses has been affected by the use of the verbal √נצל in vv. 17 and 25, which in the Hiphil form would present a rather harsh[74] reading: "take away" or "snatch away"[75] when compared to the gentler אצל of the Masoretic textual tradition. In spite of the high esteem that the later Samaritan theology places on Moses,[76] such a term is surprising unless the idea is that only a violent wrenching away could secure a portion of Moses' spirit for the seventy. Later Samaritan theology insists that Moses' uniqueness was in no way changed.

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[73]   Several changes are evident that do not seem to have grave interpretative value. For example in Num 11.8 the ⓂⒹ does not have או "or" as in the Ⓢ, but has the conjunctive-*waw*. However, the Ⓢ also reads "and" with καὶ ἔτριβον ἐν τῇ θυίᾳ. The לזרה may be a simple spelling alternative to the Ⓢ's לְאָזְרָא In 11.20; however, if it is not, then the difference would be that the לזרה follows a scattering imagery in harmony with יצא מאפכם. The Ⓜ reads היקראך rather than the Ⓢ's הֲיִקְרֶךָ in 11.23. This, however, is a spelling issue, since √קרה is translated in a similar way in Num 23.16. The spelling of מֵידָד is מודד in 11.26. This is the same as the Ⓢ which has: Μωδαδ.

[74]   George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1903), 112, calls it "too violent."

[75]   David J. A. Clines, ed. *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, vol. V (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 742.

[76]   The Samaritan creed reads, "We believe only in God and in Moses the son of Amran his servant, and in his sacred Law, and in the Mount Garizim Beth El, and in the day of punishment and reward." See Moses Gaster, *The Samaritans: Their History, Doctrines and Literature*, The Schweich Lectures 1923 (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1925), 180. Also John Macdonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans*, The New Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), 147-222. Macdonald writes on p. 147, "Samaritanism as a religion and philosophical system is unique in one respect. Though derived from the same source as Judaism and having the same Pentateuch (broadly speaking), it developed a belief in Moses, its only prophet, as the pre-eminent one of all humanity, the specially endowed of God."

Macdonald quotes the *Memar Marqah* as indicating that "his prophethood was like the surrounding sea, for from it seventy prophets prophesied without diminishing of it."[77] Hjelms has observed that the Samaritans have largely ignored the prophetic literature since it traditionally only recognized Moses as the prophet and all others as sorcerers.[78]

Second, the characterization of the elders differs from that of the Masoretic tradition, for in Num 11.25 the Samaritan Pentateuch has the words ולא יאספו "and they will not gather." Both of the Samaritan Targumim; J & A, partially confirm this reading with ולא אתכנשו.[79] Here, surprisingly, the אתכנשו is a noun meaning "gathering together."[80] Aesthetically another אסף may be welcomed in the narrative; however, the meaning of the text is at first blush nebulous. If the text is best translated with a passive connotation, i.e., "and they will not be gathered," which occurs for the Niphal form, then the idea is that the elders would not die on account of the revelatory experience, as the elders did not die in Exod 24.11. Another possible interpretation is to view the verbal construction as an antithetical clause to Num 11.30, where the Niphal form ויאסף is understood as indicating that "Moses returned to the camp, both he and the elders of Israel." In this way the democratizing statements of 11.29b are slightly mitigated. Either way the reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch differs from both the Masoretic and Septuagintal traditions. Here the elders are allowed to continue the Mosaic prophetic tradition, while the democratization is looked at askance.

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[77]   Macdonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans*, 209. See also S. Lowy, *The Principles of Samaritan Bible Exegesis*, Studia Post-Biblica (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 371.

[78]   Ingrid Hjelm, *The Samaritans and Early Judaism: A Literary Analysis* JSOTSup 303; Copenhagen International Seminar 7 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 254-55.

[79]   Abraham Tal, *The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch: A Critical Edition*, Part II Leviticus, Numeri, Deuteronomium (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 1981), 190-91. It is interesting to note that Abraham Tal, "Divergent Traditions of the Samaritan Pentateuch as Reflected by Its Aramaic Targum," *JAB* 1 (1999), 313, argues that ". . . a plurality of texts existed in ancient Samaritan religious life."

[80]   Stephen A. Kaufman, ed., *Targum Lexicon: Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*, electronic edition, Logos Bible Software (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 2005).

The three major traditions are part of the textual materials that thrived in the late Persian and early Hellenistic periods of Judaean history. They, along with other textual streams, were available for the budding Christian movement. An important thing to keep in mind is that these readings have much in common. First, they weave two major plot lines together in such a way as to unify the message of the chapter. Second, it is also clear that the murmuring and a growing discontent with Yahweh that began to evidence a countermemory of Egypt is the offense in all textual trajectories. Third, Moses' role as intercessor is crucial for all traditions. If one of the major roles of a prophet was to intercede on behalf of those who offend God, then the assistance of the elders would have been to follow in this vein. Fourth, all traditions indicated that in an almost *lex talion* fashion the craved meat became a judgment. It is with these four common elements that the message of the total textual traditions should be understood.

At the same time, the pluriform textual witnesses provide their own unique points of emphasis. The Hebrew readings in the Masoretic and Samaritan trajectories have highlighted the רוח√ as one of its unifying *Leitwörter*, but the Septuagint has used the idea of craving as an added stitch. Where the Masoretic and Samaritan traditions find the people as a whole to be culpable, the Septuagint isolates the mixed group as blameworthy. It is true that the Masoretic textual tradition and the Septuagint have placed Moses as the central figure in the narrative, the Samaritan reading has lifted his esteem at least one notch. It is these pluriform readings that the primitive Church understood as part of the message of Numbers 11.

A Pentecostal Perspectival Application of Numbers 11

In the earliest Pentecostal interpretation of Num 11 that I could find, Alice Flowers focused on Moses' intercession instead of a Spirit Baptism analogy or a promise for a prophethood of the believers. She wrote that "the petulant murmuring of the people was too much even for the very meek Moses. He failed and yet through his failure and recourse to God we catch a glimpse of that haven sure and effective in every distressing predicament."[81] Although I would disagree with her

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[81]   Alice Flowers, "A Day of Decision - Review," *The Christian Evangel* (Dec. 20, 1913), 7. This quote is from a review article summarizing a Sunday school lesson entitled "Moses' Cry for Help." I did not have access to the original article.

understanding that Moses failed, I would agree that the problem in the chapter derives from the murmuring of the people. A Pentecostal perspectival understanding of this chapter must begin from this point of departure. I would add that a contextual reading of Num 11, would attempt to understand the murmuring and growing countermemory concerning Egypt within the literary parameters of Num 10.11-14.45, where an almost ideal departure from Mount Sinai is marred by an escalating series of insubordination and rebellion against Moses and Yahweh. In spite of and in the very context of this growing sin, Moses is able to graciously wish that all Yahweh's people would become prophets and be given the רוח. As the רוח has been shown to be integrally related to the bearing of the burden of the people for the elders, so also the רוח given to the people as a whole should touch on these matters. The chapter understands prophesying and the reception of the רוח as generally within a revelatory sphere, but not in isolation to the issues of murmuring and countermemory.

Murmuring and a growing countermemory is the very context of Moses' intercession on behalf of the people, a pattern that will continue to the end of chapter 14. It is in intercession that we may see a prophetic function that is close to the center of the rhetorical message of Num 11. Moses' intercession is not a disinterested activity on his part. His stance as a loyal opposition is aggressive and dangerous in his use of hyperbole. A Pentecostal reading of this chapter therefore should emphasize the intercessory challenge that is being proffered.[82]

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[82]   This article is based on chapter 4 of my doctoral dissertation. See David C. Hymes, "A Pluriform Analysis of Numbers 10.11-14.45" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wales, Bangor, 2010), 80-132, for a more detailed analysis.