

Numbers

The Book of Wanderings

The Book of Numbers Title

1) The Title “Book of Numbers”:

In reference to the two censuses of the Hebrew people taken, one near the beginning and the other toward the end of the journey in the desert (Numbers Chapters 1 and 26).

2) The Title “Book of Wonderings”:

In reference to the experiences of the Israelites for a period of thirty-eight years, from the end of their encampment at Sinai to their arrival at the border of the Promised Land.

Background and Theme

- The Hebrew people left Egypt one year ago. They are still at Sinai.
- God has already given Moses the Law for the people.
- The tabernacle has been completed.
- It is now time to move into Canaan.
- Theme: God has a plan for His people. The LORD's people must live each day by faith in Him and His word if they are to please Him and *enjoy* His plan of blessings in time.

Unbelief and disobedience bring painful consequences, but the LORD, in grace, always keeps His Word to His people.

Main Characters

- Moses
- Aaron
- Caleb => Ch 13
- Joshua => Ch 13
- Korah, Dathan, and Abiram => Ch 16
- Balak => Ch 22-24
- Balaam => Ch 22-24

Numbers: Narrative, 1

- Numbers begins with Moses counting the people in preparation for the march to Canaan. The **first census** was on second day of the second month of the second year dated from the time they left Egypt—April 1445 BC It is only 13 months after leaving Egypt (Numbers 1:1-4).

Numbers: Narrative, 2

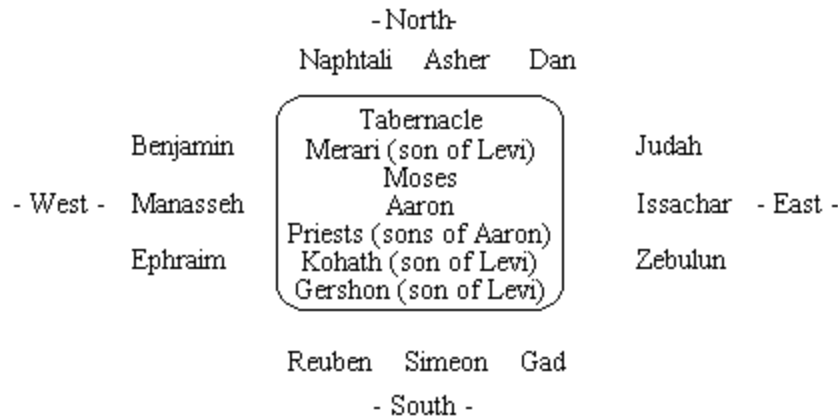
- **Twenty days later** the Israelites begin the trip to Canaan (10:11). Along the way they repeatedly disbelieve and disobey God: complain about no meat; Aaron and Miriam jealous; unbelief of the spies; military defeats; Korah rebellion; Moses hits the rock; complain against Moses followed by the fiery serpents; Balak and Balaam and idolatry; As a result, God disciplines them in order to prepare them to enter Canaan.

Numbers: Narrative, 3

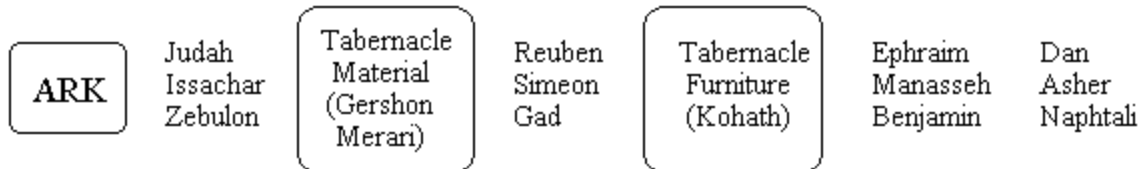
- **After 39 years** of wandering, God tells Moses to take a **new census** (26:2). They are in **the Plains of Moab**, near the Jordan River across from Jericho, where they would stay for about **five months**. The old generation had died; the new generation was ready to take their land.
- **Moses inaugurated Joshua** as the the new leader (27:18). Moses then gave instructions for dividing the land and for living in Canaan.
- The events in Numbers cover 39 years.

Order of Settling and Moving

Israel Camped Around the Tabernacle



Tribes in Marching Order



Numbers Outline

- 1. Preparation and Organization at Sinai for the journey (1-9)**
- 2. From Sinai to the Plains of Moab:**
 - **Failures, Wanderings, and Kadesh-Barnea (10-20)**
- 3. At the Plains of Moab:**
 - a) Balaam, and Idolatry (21-25)**
 - b) Instructions before crossing the Jordan, and Joshua**

Numbers Chapter Titles: Preparation at Sinai, 1-9

Chapter 1: Census at Sinai.

Chapter 2: Camp arrangement.

Chapter 3: Levites' Camp and Duties.

Chapter 4: Levites' Census and Duties.

Chapter 5: Unclean, Sin, Law of Jealousy.

Chapter 6: Nazirite vow.

Chapter 7: Offerings at tabernacle dedication.

Chapter 8: Levites in place of firstborn.

Chapter 9: Passover. Cloud and Fire.

Cloud by Day



Fire by Night



Failures, Wanderings, and Kadesh-Barnea, 10-20

Chapter 10: Two trumpets. Leave Sinai.

Chapter 11: Grace in spite of complaining—quail.

Chapter 12: Miriam and Aaron jealous of Moses.

Chapter 13: Spies to Canaan.

Chapter 14: Will not enter Canaan.

Chapter 15: Offerings and punishment
when in Canaan.



Failures, Wanderings, and Kadesh-Barnea, 10-20

Chapter 16: Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.
God judges.

Chapter 17: Aaron's rod budded.

Chapter 18: Priests and Levites: Duties
and support.

Chapter 19: The red heifer and cleansing.

Chapter 20: Moses hits the rock. Edom.
Aaron dies.



Plains of Moab, Balaam, and Idolatry, 21-25

- Chapter 21: The bronze serpent.
Amorites and others.
- Chapter 22: Balaam, the Angel, and the donkey.
- Chapter 23: Balaam blesses Israel –
Prophetic proverbs 1-2.
- Chapter 24: Balaam blesses Israel –
Prophetic proverbs 3-7.



Plains of Moab, instructions before crossing the Jordan, and Joshua, 26-36

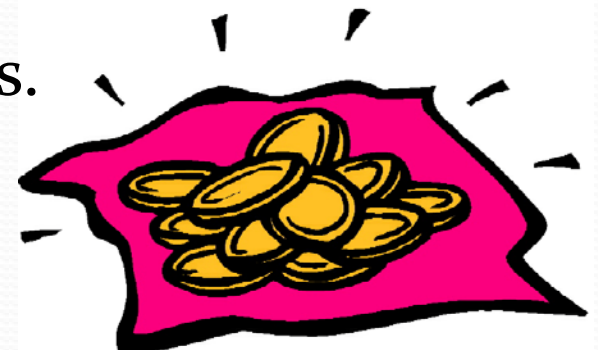
Chapter 25: Idolatry with Moabites and Midianites, and judgment.

Chapter 26: Census of the new generation.

Chapter 27: Passing the Mantel to Joshua.

Chapter 28: Offerings, sacrifices, feasts.

Chapter 29: Offerings, sacrifices, feasts.



Plains of Moab, instructions before crossing the Jordan, and Joshua, 26-36

Chapter 30: Vows.

Chapter 31: Midian's defeat and the spoil.

Chapter 32: Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh's land.

Chapter 33: Egypt to the Jordan—a review.

Chapter 34: Borders, leaders, and lands.

Chapter 35: Levite cities. Murder.

Chapter 36: No inter-tribe land transfer.

ISRAEL'S COMPLAINING

PASSAGE

NUM. 11:1 ABOUT THEIR
HARDSHIP

NUM. 11:4 ABOUT LACK OF MEAT

NUM. 14:1-4 ABOUT BEING
STURCK IN THE DESERT, FACING
THE GIANTS

NUM. 16:3 ABOUT MOSES' AND
AARON'S AUTHORITY AND
LEADERSHIP

NUM. 16:41 THAT MOSES CAUSED
THE DEATHS OF KORAH AND HIS
CONSPIRATORS

NUM. 20:2-3 ABOUT THE LACK OF
WATER

NUM. 21:5 THAT GOD AND MOSES
BROUGHT THEM INTO THE
DESERT

SIN

COMPLAINED ABOUT THEIR
HARDSHIP

LUSTED AFTER THINGS THEY
DID NOT HAVE

REBELLED AGAINST GOD'S
LEADERS AND FAILED TO TRUST
IN HIS PROMISES

WERE GREEDY FOR MORE
POWER AND AUTHORITY

BLAMED OTHERS FOR THEIR
OWN TROUBLE

REFUSED TO BELIEVE THAT GOD
WOULD PROVIDE AS HE HAD
PROMISED

FAILED TO RECOGNIZE THAT
THEIR PROBLEMS WERE
BROUGHT BY THEIR
DISOBEDIENCE

RESULT

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WERE
DESTROYED

GOD SENT QUAIL; BUT GOD
STRUCK THEM AS THE PEOPLE
BEGAN TO EAT
ALL WHO COMPLAINED WERE
NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER THE
PROMISED LAND, THEY ALL DIED
IN THE DESERT

KORAH, DATHAN, ABIRAM WERE
SWALLOWED UP BY THE EARTH
AND FIRE BURNED UP THE 250
OTHER MEN
GOD BEGAN TO DESTROY ISRAEL
WITH A PLAGUE:14,700 WERE
KILLED

MOSES SINNED ALONG WITH
PEOPLE; HE WAS BARRED FROM
ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND

GOD SENT VENOMOUS SNAKES
THAT KILLED MANY PEOPLE

Lessons from Numbers, 1

1. God is a God of order (Numbers 1-4; 1 Corinthians 14:40)
2. Live and obey by faith—Faith application and Faith-Rest (Numbers 11, 13, 14; Hebrews 3-4)
3. Spiritual Cowards (grumble and unbelief) and Spiritual Heroes (Numbers 11, 21, 13-14; 2 Timothy 4)
4. Authority, humility, and rebellion, in ministry (Numbers 12, 16; 1 Corinthians 4; 3 John 9-10)

Lessons from Numbers, 2

5. Divine Discipline (Numbers 11, 14, 16, 20, 21; Hebrews 12:5-13; 1 Corinthians 11:3-31; Acts 1-11)
7. Passing the mantel: transition of authority and leadership (Number 27; Titus 1:5; Philippians 2:19-30)
8. Importance of spiritual heritage (Numbers 8, 16, 34-36; Philippians 1:27-30)

Christ in the Book of Numbers

- **Cloud and Fire** (Num 9) => Guidance of Christ
- **Manna** (Num 11) => Christ is the Bread of Life (John 6)
- **Red Heifer** (Num 19) => Christ is without spot and without a yoke (sinless)
- **The Rock** (Num 20) => Christ is the Living Water (John 4)
- **The Bronze Serpent** (Num 21) => Christ's Cross (John 3:14)

Christ and Apostles refer to the Book of Numbers

In the New Testament Christ and the Apostles derive useful lessons from such events in the Book of Numbers:

- a) **The brazen serpent**; Numbers 21 => John 3:14, 15
- b) **The sedition of Korah and its consequences**; Numbers 16 => 1Co 10:10
- c) **The prophecies of Balaam**; Numbers 22-24 => 2Peter 2:15, 16
- d) **The water gushing from the rock**; Numbers 20 => 1Co 10:4