

Tapes For Growing Christians

Study Guide for  
**NUMBERS**

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## Numbers 1

### A Census of the Children of Israel, After they Had Come Out of Egypt, Before They Began Their Wilderness Wanderings

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. God expects His people to maintain order.
2. God expects His people to maintain holiness.

#### practical application

Assume the clarity of Scripture.

#### questions

1. Who was the author of Numbers?
2. When do the events recorded in Numbers begin?
3. What span of time does the book of Numbers cover?
4. What is a theme of the book of Numbers?
5. Why did the Lord command Moses to take a census of the people?
6. What was the special responsibility of the tribe of Levi?

**answers**

1. Moses wrote the book of Numbers, along with the other four books of the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy.
2. One year and one month after the children of Israel left Egypt; one month after the tabernacle was set up
3. Numbers covers about 40 years, from the Israelites' time at Mount Sinai until they are ready to enter the Land.
4. Wilderness Wanderings
5. The census was taken for military purposes, to determine how many men could go to war (Numbers 1:3).
6. The Levites were responsible for caring for everything concerning the tabernacle.

**discuss/consider**

1. Many of us skip chapters like Numbers 1 when we read through the Bible! Is there anything practical God wants us to gain from this military census? One lesson could be, "God expects His people to maintain order." God expects His people to maintain order in the church today. Read 1 Corinthians 14, especially focusing on verse 40. What can you do to help your church services function decently and in order?
2. The Levites were responsible for caring for the tabernacle and protecting it from enemies. As Christians, we have the responsibility to protect the holy character of God's table and worship. Read 1 Peter 1:15-16. God must judge His people when they do not maintain holiness. How can you encourage respect and honor of God's holiness from the people in your life?

**challenge**

Numbers 1:46 records that there were 603,550 Israelite men eligible for war. This means there were several million Israelites total! Do you acknowledge the God who can care for this many people for 40 years? Realize that He cares for you as well.

**memorize**

*"So all who were numbered...who were able to go to war in Israel...were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty." Numbers 1:45-46*

*"The Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony." Numbers 1:53*

## Numbers 2

### The Arrangement of the Tribes of Israel as They Camped around the Tabernacle and Marched in the Wilderness Wanderings

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. God desires to dwell in the midst of His people.
2. God desires His people to function as families.

#### practical application

Count your warriors and not your pew-sitters.

#### questions

1. How is this account in Numbers 2 similar to the Creation account?
2. Was there any design to the way the tribes were grouped around the tabernacle?
3. Draw a diagram of the tribes camped around the tabernacle and their marching order.
4. How did the children of Israel camp, within each tribe?

**answers**

1. Both accounts show that God is a God of order and purpose.
2. Yes, the tribes were often grouped according to family ties; consider Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin.
- 3.
4. Within each tribe, the people camped by families.

**discuss/consider**

1. When the children of Israel set up camp, the tabernacle was in the center. The tabernacle was also in the center whenever Israel marched. The tabernacle was the dwelling place of God in the midst of His people. Refer to Matthew 18:20, 1 Corinthians 3:16, and Ephesians 2:22. God desires to dwell in the midst of His people today. Discuss the comforting and sobering implications of this truth.
2. God puts great emphasis on families. The family is the basic social unit designed by God. In our culture today the institution of marriage and family are under attack. Christian families have not been exempt from this breakdown. Discuss how you, personally, can elevate your regard for family. Are you emphasizing what God emphasizes?

**challenge**

The strength of the children of Israel was determined by those who were able to go out to war. The strength of a local church is not determined by numbers only, but by those who are willing to do the work of the church. Do you only go to your church on Sunday mornings? Or are you actively involved in the ministry of the body? Be a warrior, not a pew-sitter.

**memorize**

*"Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father's house." Numbers 2:2*

*"So they camped by their standards and so they broke camp, each one by his family." Numbers 2:34*

## Numbers 3

### The Provision and the Responsibility of the Levites within the Camp of Israel

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. The Lord provides the laborers for His work.
2. The Lord divides the laborers for His work.

#### practical application

Watch out for strange fire.

#### questions

1. Where did the tribe of Levi camp within the camp of Israel?
2. What is the distinction between the Levites and the Old Testament priests?
3. How did most of the Levites function?
4. Why did all the firstborn of the children of Israel belong to the Lord?
5. Why does the Lord say here that all the Levites belong to Him?
6. What were the responsibilities of the three divisions of Levites?

### answers

1. The Levites camped right around the tabernacle, inside the circle of the other tribes.
2. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. Levi, a son of Jacob, had three sons. Thus there were three divisions of Levites, the Gershonites, the Kohathites, and the Merarites. Aaron and Moses were Kohathites, and Aaron and his descendants were designated by God to be the priestly line in Israel.
3. They helped the priests with the work of the tabernacle. Most of the Levites were tabernacle workers.
4. Because the Lord had delivered the firstborn during the Passover in Egypt (See Exodus 13:1-2).
5. Because the Levites stood as substitutes for all the firstborn
- 6.

Gershonites – coverings of the tabernacle and courtyard hangings

Kohathites – tabernacle furnishings

Merarites – boards and pillars of the tabernacle and posts and sockets of the courtyard

### discuss/consider

1. There was a lot of work involved in the functioning of the tabernacle. God provided the Levites to help the priests in the work of the Lord. The Lord will provide the laborers for His work today. If you are heading up a ministry that is truly doing the work of the Lord, God will answer your prayers for workers. "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Matthew 9:38
2. In the work of the tabernacle, the Levites were divided and given specific responsibilities. Each had an important role to play. Imagine for a moment if the Levite in charge of tent pegs decided his job was not important enough to do! Likewise, in the church today the Lord divides the laborers for His work. Refer to 1 Corinthians 12. If we were all gifted to work the same ministry, problems would arise and many vital ministries would go undone. God has given the members of the Church a variety of spiritual gifts for the edification of the body of Christ. Have you accepted God's sovereign division of labor? Do you appreciate your spiritual gift and use it? Do you respect and value the spiritual gifts of your fellow believers?

### challenge

Nadab and Abihu were struck dead for offering "strange fire" to the Lord. They did not do things God's way, and were therefore guilty of idolatry. Idolatry is not only worship of false gods; it is also false worship of the true God. Worship of God that is not Christ-centered is idolatry. Watch out for strange fire. Don't tolerate it in your church fellowship, and don't be drawn into it yourself.

### memorize

*"Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him." Numbers 3:6*

*"Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel... The Levites shall be Mine." Numbers 3:45*

## Numbers 4

### Further Details of the Responsibilities of the Three Branches of the Levites: the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. The holiness of God requires responsible protection.
2. The worship of God requires responsible work.

#### practical application

You don't have to be on the front lines to serve the Lord.

#### questions

1. Review the divisions of the Levites.
2. Could all of the Levites handle the objects in the tabernacle?
3. What is the tabernacle in the wilderness a type (spiritual picture) of?
4. How did the priests guard the holiness of God?
5. At what age did the Levites begin and end their most active ministry in the tabernacle?

**answers**

1. The sons of Kohath, the sons of Gershon, and the sons of Merari
2. No, only the priests could see the holy objects.
3. It is a type of the Church in this world.
4. They covered the holy objects with cloths and animals skins before the rest of the Kohathites came to transport them.
5. The Levites served most actively from thirty years old to fifty.

**discuss/consider**

1. The Lord dwelt amidst His people in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Today, the Church is God's dwelling place here on earth. Our lesson taught that the holiness of God must be guarded and protected. As believers, we are each priests of God and are responsible to guard the holy things of God. Discuss Matthew 7:6. Discuss how your language and humor in everyday life can either cheapen or promote respect of the things of God.
2. Along with being priests in the church of God, we are all called to be servants. List the variety of work that must be done in your local church so the people of God can worship together. This list should be surprisingly long. Are you fulfilling some of these ministries? Are you thankful for your brothers and sisters in Christ who work with the other ministries?

**challenge**

Moses used the same phrase in Numbers chapters 1 and 4 to describe the Israelites going into military service and the Levites going into the service of the tabernacle. Both of these types of service were necessary; and the people could honor God in their assigned area of service. What area of service has the Lord given you? Don't be envious that God has given another believer a "better ministry" or more noticeable service. Serve where you are. Ask the Lord to show you the value of your ministry.

**memorize**

*"Take a census of ...all who enter the service to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting." Numbers 4:2-3*

*"But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, lest they die." Numbers 4:20*

## Numbers 5

### Three Areas of Law Designed by God to Protect His People

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. The Law of Separation protected the health of the camp.
2. The Law of Recompense protected the injured of the camp.
3. The Law of Jealousy protected the women of the camp.

#### practical application

Thank the Lord that He remembers that we are dust.

#### questions

1. Who did God protect with these three laws?
2. Summarize the Law of Separation.
3. Summarize the Law of Restitution.
4. What was the offender to do if the person they wronged had already died?
5. How did the law against marital infidelity, the Law of Jealousy, protect the women?

**answers**

1. He protected the health of everyone in the camp. He protected the injured and the women of the camp.
2. People with contagious diseases or infections were quarantined from the rest of the camp for a specified time.
3. Anyone who wronged a fellow Israelite had to confess his sin, give an offering, and make full restitution for the wrong plus an additional twenty percent.
4. He was to pay restitution to the surviving relatives. If there were no relatives, he was to offer restitution to God, through the priests.
5. It gave the woman a way to prove her innocence publicly and prevent rumors and scandals. Also, since this legal procedure was demanded under the Law, it protected the woman from the rash actions of a jealous husband.

**discuss/consider**

1. The laws concerning physical holiness symbolized the covenant community's spiritual holiness. God is holy. He dwells in the midst of His people. In the church today unconfessed sin infects and defiles the body of Christ. Have you seen the negative effects on a local church when sin is not judged? Now discuss the issue of paying full restitution when you have wronged someone. Often we do not apologize and repair the situation out of embarrassment or pride. Are you in the midst of an unresolved conflict with a brother or sister in Christ? Make it right without delay (Acts 24:16).
2. Review the process of the law of jealousy. Although this law may strike us as odd at first, it carries an important spiritual picture. In the law, the woman was symbolically submitting herself to God and His word, when she drank the words of the curses that had been scraped into the water. God miraculously controlled the outcome of this test. We need to submit to the standards of the word of God and let our lives be examined by Scripture. See Psalm 139:23-24. Are you drinking the water of God's word and allowing it to examine your life and convict your conscience?

**challenge**

Read Psalm 103:13-14. We do not have to be afraid to allow God's word to examine our lives. We can thank Him that He is a gracious and merciful God and He remembers that we are dust.

**memorize**

*"As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust." Psalm 103:13-14*

*"You shall put them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camps in the midst of which I dwell." Numbers 5:3*

*"This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself." Numbers 5:29*

## The Requirements and Regulations of the Nazirite Vow and the Priestly Blessing

### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### doctrinal points

1. The Nazirite vow involves separation.
2. The Nazirite vow involved sacrifice.

### practical application

You too can be a Nazirite.

### questions

1. What significant archeological discovery was made in the Hinnom Valley in 1975?
2. What is the oldest fragment of the Bible available today?
3. What was a Nazirite?
4. What is the difference between a Nazirite and a Nazarene?
5. Name three notable Nazirites in the Bible.
6. What were the three requirements of the Nazirite vow?

**answers**

1. Two silver amulets were found containing tiny scrolls. On these scrolls was written the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:24-26.
2. This priestly blessing was written on the scrolls dated back to 700 B.C.
3. A Nazirite was a layman or laywoman who took a vow of consecration to God's service for a specific period of time, sometimes for life.
4. A Nazirite was someone set aside for the Lord's service. A Nazarene, like our Lord Jesus, was someone from the city of Nazareth.
5. Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist.
6.
  - 1) Nazirites must abstain from wine, strong drink, and any product made from grapes.
  - 2) Nazirites could not cut their hair.
  - 3) Nazirites could not go near the dead.

**discuss/consider**

1. God wanted to bless His people, as He reminded them through the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:24-26. God wants to bless His people today. Step through the priestly blessing and discuss how God does and will bless us in the ways listed.
2. Review the symbolism of the requirements of the Nazirite vow. By abstaining from wine, the Nazirite was saying, "All my joy is found in the Lord." Uncut hair made it evident to others when someone claimed to be a Nazirite. Nazirites were symbolically separated from anything that defiled. Apply these points to yourself as a Christian.

**challenge**

Although the Nazirite vow was only for God's people in Old Testament times, you too can be a Nazirite in a sense. You can be separated, consecrated, and committed to the Lord and to serving Him. Have you separated yourself from evil and unto God? Pray and make this commitment soon.

**memorize**

*"All the days of his separation [the Nazirite] shall be holy to the LORD." Numbers 6:8*

*"The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." Numbers 6:24-26*

## Numbers 7

### The Records of the Gifts and Offerings that the Leaders of the Twelve Tribes Gave at the Dedication of the Tabernacle and the Altar

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. Every gift to God is an offering before the Lord.
2. Every gift of God is recorded in His book.

#### practical application

Speak to God so that He can speak to you.

#### questions

1. What is the longest chapter in the Pentateuch? What is the longest chapter in the Bible?
2. When does Numbers 7 take place?
3. Why were the leaders of the twelve tribes bringing all of these gifts and offerings?
4. Why did the twelve tribes each bring their offerings on successive days, rather than all on one day?

**answers**

1. Numbers 7 is the longest chapter in the Pentateuch and the second longest in the Bible. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible.
2. This chapter records the events immediately following the set up of the tabernacle, even before the military census of Numbers chapter 1.
3. For the dedication of the new tabernacle and altar.
4. One reason would be the considerable time it would take to sacrifice so many animals.

**discuss/consider**

1. The twelve tribes gave many gifts for the dedication of the tabernacle. These gifts came in many different forms – carts, oxen, silver, incense, etc. Whatever you give for the service of the Lord is a gift to God, and therefore an offering before Him. How can you give to the service of the Lord? Think beyond tithing your money. List some creative ideas.
2. These gifts to God were offerings to the Lord, and therefore they were worship. Even though each tribe offered the same gifts every day, God did not have Moses skip over them when he was writing Numbers. Every gift to God is important to Him. Do you think of your singing on Sunday morning as a gift to God? Are you giving Him your best? Remember God is never bored with our worship.

**challenge**

The Levites were responsible for transporting the pieces of the tabernacle. In Numbers 7, the other tribes gave carts and oxen to help the Levites perform their service. God always provides for the needs of His people to do the work He has called them to do. Has God called you to do a certain work for Him? Pray, believing that He will provide what you need to carry out this service.

**memorize**

*"Then the leaders of Israel, who were the leaders of the tribes, made an offering." Numbers 7:89*

*"Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him...thus He spoke to him." Numbers 7:89*

*"For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name." Hebrews 6:10*

## Numbers 8

### The Setting up of the Lamp on the Lampstands of the Tabernacle and the Consecration of the Levites

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. Servants of the Lord should be fully committed to the Lord.
2. Servants of the Lord should move on for the Lord.

#### practical application

Let's keep the lamps lit.

#### questions

1. What is the subject matter of Numbers 8?
2. Were there any windows in the tabernacle?
3. How is the lampstand a type of Christ?
4. Who were the Levites? How were they different from the priests?
5. Outline the Levites' consecration ceremony.

**answers**

1. Lamps and Levites
2. No, all light in the tabernacle came from the golden lampstands.
3. As all light in the tabernacle came from the lampstand, so all spiritual light in the Church and for believers is found in Christ, the light of the world.
4. The Levites were the tabernacle workers. They helped the priests with all the work of the tabernacle. The priests were a subset of the Levites, the descendants of Aaron and his sons.
5. First, the Levites were sprinkled with purifying water. Next the Levites washed their clothes and shaved their whole bodies. They next offered sacrifices. Finally, the Levites themselves were offered as a wave offering.

**discuss/consider**

1. In Isaiah 42:6, God tells the nation of Israel that He desires them to be "a light to the Gentiles." This was symbolized by Aaron lighting the lamps in the tabernacle. Although the nation failed in its mission, the Lord Jesus fulfilled His role as "the light of the world." Discuss other references to light in the Old and New Testaments.
2. Review the consecration procedure for the Levites. How does this picture our total commitment to the Lord? Discuss this step by step. Are you fully committed to the Lord?

**challenge**

The Levites' most active service for the Lord was between ages 25 and 50. Are the servants of the Lord in your local church following this model? If you are a younger servant you should be watching the older generation and apprenticing under them. If you are an older servant, have you taken the younger generation under your wing to train them up to carry on the service? Servants of the Lord of all ages have a valuable ministry for the Lord. Perform your service wisely.

**memorize**

*"The seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand." Numbers 8:2*

*"Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them ceremonially." Numbers 8:6*

## Numbers 9

### The Celebration of the Passover, Further Instructions Concerning the Passover, and a Description of How God Led His People Through the Wilderness by Means of His Cloud

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. God expects His people to remember how He saved them.
2. God expects His people to follow where He leads them.

#### practical application

Leave the where and the when to God.

#### questions

1. The events recorded in Numbers thus far have not been in chronological order. List these events as they would have occurred.
2. Why were the children of Israel to keep the Passover every year?
3. Why does 1 Corinthians 5:7 refer to Christ as our Passover Lamb?
4. Why was there a cloud above the Israelites' camp?
5. How did the Israelites know where and when to move camp?

## answers

1.

- The tabernacle was erected
- The tribes brought offerings for twelve days
- The lamps on the golden lampstand were lit
- The Levites were consecrated
- Passover was celebrated
- A military census was taken

2. In keeping the Passover, the children of Israel remembered how God had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

3. Just as the children of Israel had to apply the blood of their Passover lamb to their doorposts, so we must apply the blood of Christ to our lives for salvation.

4. The cloud was a symbol of the presence of the Lord. The Lord was always with His people during their time in the wilderness.

5. When the cloud moved, the people broke camp and followed where God determined. When the cloud remained over the tabernacle, the people remained encamped where they were.

## discuss/consider

1. God expected the children of Israel to remember their redemption from slavery in Egypt. Today He expects us to remember our salvation from slavery to sin. Share with one another the story of how God redeemed you. Marvel at the different ways He uses to bring people to salvation, and praise Him for choosing you.

2. During the wilderness wanderings, God used a cloud to lead His people. Whenever it moved, they moved. And wherever it stopped, they camped. Discuss how this method of leading is full of spiritual principles for us today. God expects His people to follow where He leads them. This principle is true for believers individually and believers collectively in the church. How is your church seeking to follow God as a group? How are you following God individually?

## challenge

God sovereignly determined where and when His people moved. He knows the "wheres and whens" of your life as well. He will lead and guide you if you turn to Him. Read the promise of Psalm 32:8.

## memorize

*"Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time." Numbers 9:2*

*"At the command of the LORD they remained encamped, and at the command of the LORD they journeyed." Numbers 9:23*

## Numbers 10

### **The Lord's Directive to Moses to Make Two Silver Trumpets to be used in Summoning and Signaling the Children of Israel and the Record of the People Moving from Mount Sinai, where the Law was given, and Beginning their Journey toward the Promised Land**

#### **background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### **doctrinal points**

1. Divine guidance does not eliminate human leadership.
2. Divine guidance does not exclude human help.

#### **practical application**

1. Communicate in no uncertain terms if you are a spiritual leader.
2. Let's pray before and after our travels.

#### **questions**

1. List the five ways the silver trumpets were used.
2. Were these trumpets only for the Israelites' time in the wilderness?
3. How long were the Israelites encamped at Mount Sinai?
4. Where was the Wilderness of Paran (verse 12)?
5. Who was Hobab? Did Hobab decide to stay with the Israelites as a scout?
6. Was Moses showing a lack of faith by asking Hobab for help?

## answers

1.

- 1) to summon the people to assemble at the tabernacle,
- 2) to assemble the leaders only,
- 3) to signal the people when to move out for travel,
- 4) to sound an alarm in time of war, and
- 5) to announce special days such as feast days

2. No, verse 9 says they were to be used once the Israelites went into "their land."

3. They camped at Mount Sinai for about eleven months; they left about two months after the tabernacle was erected.

4. The Wilderness of Paran was south of the Land of Canaan. This area included Kadesh Barnea, from which the spies went into the Land.

5. He was Moses brother-in-law, a Midianite. Probably so, Judges 1:16 and 4:11 record Hobab's descendants as part of Israel.

6. No, Moses was using common sense to take advantage of Hobab's scouting skills and knowledge of the area.

## discuss/consider

1. In the last chapter we read how God gave His cloud to lead the people in the wilderness. God also commanded the priests to blow the trumpets to lead the people. It is true, then and today, that divine guidance does not eliminate human leadership. Discuss the ways God will guide a believer individually. Discuss how God uses spiritual leaders to guide His people as well. Have you placed yourself under spiritual leaders whom God can use to guide you? Are you respecting and following their guidance?

2. God often uses human advisors to help His people make the right decisions. Review instances of this in the Bible. The same can be true in your life. Are you seeking the counsel of godly Christians when you have an important decision to make? Read Proverbs 11:14 and discuss this principle.

## challenge

Moses prayed for victory whenever the people broke camp, and he prayed for peace whenever they set up camp. We too can pray before and after our travels. What an excellent example to show your children.

## memorize

*"Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps." Numbers 10:2*

*"The ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them." Numbers 10:33*

**Numbers 11:1-15**

**The Record of The Children of Israel Complaining  
About Their Problems and Provisions in Their Wilderness Wanderings**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. The sin of complaining results from discontent in the human heart.
2. The sin of complaining results in the discouragement of God's leaders.

**practical application**

Don't crave the food of Egypt.

**questions**

1. What time span does the book of Numbers cover?
2. Why did the Israelites have to wander in the wilderness for forty years?
3. Why did God lead Moses to record the Israelites' sins of the wilderness?
4. What were the children of Israel complaining about in Numbers 11?
5. How is manna a spiritual picture of Christ?
6. Why does Moses complain in Numbers 11?
7. Why did God's people get tired of His provision of manna?

**answers**

1. Numbers addresses the forty years between the Israelite's Exodus from Egypt and their Conquest of Canaan.
2. Because of their sin of unbelief and complaining.
3. As a warning for us, so we will not commit the same sins. See 1 Corinthians 10:8-12.
4. They complained about their problems and provisions.
5. In John 6 the Lord Jesus compares Himself to manna. He is not only the means of our salvation; He is the spiritual food and sustenance for our souls.
6. Moses complained because he was discouraged. He was burned out from working with complaining people.
7. Because they craved the foods of Egypt.

**discuss/consider**

1. When the people complained, the Lord was displeased. The Lord is displeased when we, His children, complain today. Complaining is one of the sins of the wilderness that will keep us from the joy, blessing, and victories of the abundant life. Discuss why we complain about our problems. What do we gain by complaining? Do you also complain about the Lord's provision for you? How would being content in Christ keep you from complaining?
2. When the Lord's people constantly grumble and complain, the spiritual leaders of the flock get very discouraged. Burnout because of discouragement is the number one reason people leave the ministry today. Think about your local church. Are your spiritual leaders discouraged because of your complaining? After you have stopped complaining, what can you do to actively encourage your church leaders?

**challenge**

God redeemed His people from the bondage and slavery of Egypt, just as He has redeemed believers out of the slavery of this world. But too often we crave the spicy foods of this world. When you crave what this world has to offer, your desire for the things of the Lord will diminish. Ask yourself this week if you are desiring the things of this world or being pleased with God's provisions.

**memorize**

*"Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD." Numbers 11:1*

*"So Moses said to the LORD, 'Why have You afflicted Your servant?'" Numbers 11:11*

**Numbers 11:16-25**

**The Lord Directs His Over-worked Servant Moses  
to Get the Assistance of Seventy Elders in Israel  
and The Way the Lord Plans to Answer the Complaints of the Children of Israel**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. The Lord graciously relieves the workloads of His servants.
2. The Lord reluctantly answers the complaints of His children.

**practical application**

Don't forget the size of the Lord's arm.

**questions**

1. What did Moses do when he felt overwhelmed by his workload?
2. Review the three-step procedure to follow when you feel overwhelmed by your workload.
3. What is hyperbole? Where is it used in this passage?
4. How did the Lord answer the Israelites' complaint about having no meat?

**answers**

1. He went to the Lord for help.

2.

1) Determine whether your workload is actually overwhelming.

2) Determine whether your work is actually what the Lord has called you to do.

3) Ask the Lord for help and assistance.

3. Hyperbole is a figure of speech where purposeful exaggeration is used to get the point across. The Lord uses hyperbole in Number 11:20 to say the Israelites would have so much meat they would be sick of it.

4. He sent them so much quail meat that they become sick of it.

**discuss/consider**

1. Discuss the various ministries God has given to you. Are you feeling overwhelmed by this workload? Remember, God gives you the strength and ability to do whatever He has called you to do. Sometime this provision comes in the form of other people, whom the Lord provides to help you. Discuss how you have seen God provide for the ministries in which you are involved.

2. When the Israelites complained about their lack of meat, God gave them so much quail they became sick of it. This quail was not a reward to them, but actually a chastisement. Don't assume that when God gives you what you want, He is pleased with your lifestyle. He may be reluctantly answering your complaint to teach you a lesson. Share if you have ever seen this to be true in your own life.

**challenge**

Moses questioned where the meat would come from to feed the children of Israel. He had forgotten the size the Lord's arm – His power and ability to do what He says He will do. Have you forgotten the size of the Lord's arm? The Lord has the power to save even you, and answer whatever needs you bring to Him.

**memorize**

*"They shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone." Numbers 11:17*

*"Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat." Numbers 11:18*

*"Has the LORD's arm been shortened?" Numbers 11:23*

**Numbers 11:26-35**

**The Spirit of the Lord Coming upon Two Elders who were not at the Tabernacle and the Large Number of Quail the Lord Brought into the Camp to Discipline the Complaining People**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. The Lord is pleased with the spiritual desires of His people.
2. The Lord is displeased with the selfish desires of His people.

**practical application**

Don't have "Kibroth Hattaavah" written on your tombstone.

**questions**

1. Review what happened earlier in Numbers 11.
2. How does Romans 15:4 apply to Numbers 11?
3. What was the purpose of the Spirit of the Lord coming upon the seventy elders, allowing them to prophesy?
4. Why was Joshua concerned about these two elders prophesying in the camp?
5. Why did the Lord strike the Israelites dead when they ate the quail?

**answers**

1. The Children of Israel were complaining about their problems and provisions. The Lord was displeased about their complaining and said He would send them so much meat to eat they would be sick of it. He also told Moses to appoint seventy elders to assist him with his workload.
2. Romans 15:4 says that everything written before was written for our learning. This means we are to learn a lesson from the account in Numbers 11 so we do not commit the "sins of the wilderness" and fall short of the spiritual blessings the Lord has for us.
3. Their prophesying confirmed Moses' selection and showed the people that they were chosen of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
4. He was afraid they would try to usurp Moses' spiritual authority.
5. Because they never paused to thank the Lord for His provision. They just began to gorge their appetites.

**discuss/consider**

1. Moses was not jealous when the seventy elders began to prophesy. He was pleased that the Spirit of the Lord had come upon them, and wished this could be true of every Israelite. Today every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. God is pleased when we want to use our natural talents and spiritual gifts to serve one another. Read 1 Peter 4:10 and 1 Timothy 1:3. What are your spiritual desires? When you see other believers with fervent spiritual desires, do you become jealous of them, or are you thankful that the Spirit is working within them? God is pleased with our spiritual desires.
2. Are you pleasing the Lord with your desires, or do you desire things that are dishonoring to Him? 2 Corinthians 5:9 and Colossians 1:10 say it should be our desire to please the Lord. When believers have selfish desires and are discontent and complaining, the Lord is displeased. When the Lord provides something you have desired, do you stop to thank Him for His provision?

**challenge**

After many Israelites were struck down with the plague, they were buried in a place called, "Graves of Craving." The legacy these people left behind was their lifestyle of selfish desires and cravings. What kind of legacy are you leaving behind? Could your grave be labeled better than "Grave of Craving"?

**memorize**

*"Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!" Numbers 11:29*

*"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4*

**Another Sin of the Wilderness: The Sin of Criticism**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. The sin of criticism results from jealousy in the human heart.
2. The sin of criticism results in the delay of God's people.

**practical application**

Remember, the Lord hears what you don't want Him to hear.

**questions**

1. Who wrote the book of Numbers?
2. How could Moses write of himself in verse 3 that he was the most humble man on earth?
3. On what basis were Miriam and Aaron criticizing Moses?
4. What was the reason behind their criticism?
5. Is God against interracial marriage?
6. Why did only Miriam become leprous and not Aaron also?

**answers**

1. Moses wrote Numbers, and the other books of the Pentateuch.
2. There are three possible explanations: 1) Since God was the divine Author of this book, He led Moses to write it under inspiration; 2) Another inspired writer may have added this verse later; 3) In Moses' day, humility was not as outstanding a virtue as it is today.
3. They criticized his person and position. They criticized his marriage and his leadership.
4. Jealousy
5. God is not against interracial marriage. Here He chastises Miriam and Aaron for criticizing Moses' marriage. Moses was married to a Cushite, or Ethiopian, woman. The Cushites were descendants of Ham, while Moses was a descendant of Shem.
6. In the original Hebrew, the verb "spoke" in verse 1 is feminine singular. This indicates Miriam instigated the criticism of Moses.

**discuss/consider**

1. Miriam and Aaron had high positions in the camp of Israel, as prophetess and high priest, respectively. Yet they were jealous of Moses and used their jealousy to criticize his person and position. Often when we are jealous of someone we try to lower their position by criticizing their person or position. Has this been true in your life? How can you stop yourself the next time you are tempted to criticize someone?
2. Moses did not take revenge on Miriam and Aaron when they criticized him. He left it to God, and God stepped in and punished them. Read Romans 12:19. It is hard not to seek revenge when we are wronged. How can we remind ourselves to leave it to the Lord and let Him bring out the truth?

**challenge**

Miriam was punished with leprosy for criticizing Moses. Yet Moses prayed to the Lord to heal her (Numbers 12:14). Do you have this attitude toward people who have wronged you? Forgive someone who has wronged you this week.

**memorize**

*"Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth." Numbers 12:3*

*"Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?" Numbers 12:8*

*"So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again." Numbers 12:15*

**Numbers 13:1-20**

**The Record of the Twelve Spies of Israel, Who Went Up from the Wilderness to Spy Out the Land of Canaan**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. God permits His people to scout out the Promised Land.
2. God expects His people to possess the Promised Land.

**practical application**

Are we passing the test of the land?

**questions**

1. What does the name "Hoshea" mean? What does "Joshua" mean?
2. Who initiated the scouting expedition into the Land?
3. Why was it not God's best for the Israelites to spy out the Land?
4. Describe how the Israelite's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land is a spiritual picture of our Christian lives.

**answers**

1. "Hosea" simply means "salvation;" "Joshua" means "God is salvation."
2. Deuteronomy 1 records the people asking Moses to send spies into the Land. Numbers 13 records God telling Moses to send the spies, in response to the people's request.
3. God had already given the Land to the children of Israel, and told them it was a good land. Because of their unbelief and doubting, the people requested to spy out the Land. God graciously permitted them to do so.
4.
  - Egypt represents the world and our slavery to sin. We are saved from this when we apply the blood of the true Passover Lamb to our lives
  - The Lord does not want us wandering in the wilderness of Christian experience. He wants us living in and possessing the Land. This Land is the Land of Blessings which we have in Christ. It is also the realm of spiritual battles, where we are guaranteed victory if we walk by faith.

**discuss/consider**

1. Every person on earth is born in need of salvation. Discuss the different things people look to for salvation. There is only one true way of salvation – God's way. What is God's way of salvation? Read John 14:6.
2. Discuss the two doctrinal points as they relate to the Christian life. Do you take God at His word, and believe He has a land of blessing for you? Are you living in and possessing that Land?

**challenge**

God used the Promised Land to test the faith of His people. Would they believe what He said about the Land? The Israelites failed the test. What about you? When your faith is tested, will you pass?

**memorize**

*"Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel." Numbers 13:2*

*"Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land." Numbers 13:20*

**Numbers 13:21-33**

**The Scouting Report of the Land of Canaan, Given by the Twelve Spies**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. Unbelief sees obstacles from the human perspective.
2. Faith sees obstacles from the divine perspective.

**practical application**

How do you spell "giant"?

**questions**

1. How much distance did the spies cover on their scouting expedition?
2. Who were the "nephilim" or giants described in Numbers 13:33?
3. Did the spies bring back a good report about the Land?
4. What was at the root of the spies' bad report?
5. Why did Joshua and Caleb have faith that they could conquer the Land?

**answers**

1. About 500 miles
2. They were people of very large stature, who lived in the land of Canaan.
3. The spies reported that the Land "truly flows with milk and honey" (Numbers 13:27). Then they added, "Nevertheless..."
4. They gave a bad report because of their unbelief. See Hebrews 3:19.
5. Because they were seeing the situation from God's perspective.

**discuss/consider**

1. You will become easily discouraged when you look at obstacles from the human perspective. Are you facing an obstacle in your life right now that is preventing you from enjoying spiritual blessings, or involving you in spiritual battles? This may be an opportunity to strengthen your faith. You can pray as the man in Mark 9:24, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"
2. God has ways of removing obstacles from the life of a believer. Perhaps you are facing an obstacle such as fear of your eternal security or doubt about your salvation. How would you counsel someone who was facing these fears? What truths from the Bible could you point them to?

**challenge**

If you have realized, through this study, that you are making your giants bigger than God, begin little steps toward strengthening your faith this week.

**memorize**

*"Caleb...said, 'Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.'" Numbers 13:30*

*"And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out." Numbers 13:32*

*"We were like grasshoppers in our own sight." Numbers 13:33*

**Numbers 14:1-19**

**The Reaction of the Children of Israel to the Report of the Twelve Spies  
Concerning the Land of Canaan, which God had Promised to Give to His People**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. The sin of compromise results from unbelief in the human heart.
2. The sin of compromise results in loss of the abundant life.

practical application

Let's be more concerned for God's glory than our own glory.

**questions**

1. How long were the spies on their scouting expedition? How far did they scout?
2. What did the spies report about the Land?
3. Did all of the spies bring the same report?
4. Review the miraculous ways God had provided for the Children of Israel to this point.
5. Diagram the Sins of the Wilderness.
6. What was Moses' response when God said He planned to remove these rebellious Israelites?

**answers**

1. The twelve spies were gone for 40 days; they traveled over 500 miles and scouted as far north as modern-day Lebanon.
2. They reported that it was a good and productive land, flowing with milk and honey. They also reported that they would not be able to enter the Land, because the cities were fortified and the people were too strong.
3. No, two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, believed that the fortified cities and giants were no problem for God.
4. He had used the ten plagues to miraculously bring the Children of Israel out of Egypt. He had parted the Red Sea before them, and caused Pharaoh and his armies to drown. He led the Israelites in the wilderness and provided manna for them to eat.
5. The Tree of Pride, with Roots of Self, is rooted in the Sinful Nature. Four branches on the Tree of Pride are the Branch of Discontent, the Branch of Jealousy, the Branch of Unbelief, and the Branch of Rebellion. Each of these branches has "C-leaves". The Branch of Discontent has Leaves of Complaining (Numbers 11). The Branch of Jealousy has Leaves of Criticism (Numbers 12). The Branch of Unbelief has Leaves of Compromise (Numbers 14). The Branch of Rebellion has Leaves of Contempt (Numbers 16).
6. Moses was concerned for God's name and glory. He did not want the Egyptians or Canaanites to say the God of Israel was weak. He prayed for forgiveness on behalf of the people.

**discuss/consider**

1. The sin of compromise results from unbelief in the human heart. This unbelief is not referring to belief for salvation. This is the issue of whether a believer is living by faith. Do you really believe the promises and word of God? Or are you making compromises in your Christian life. Recall a time when you have compromised in your Christian life. How did this affect your already weak faith?
2. The Lord Jesus has come not only to give us life, but abundant life (John 10:10). What is the abundant life? Are you experiencing this abundant life? Or is your life filled with doubt, discouragement, depression, and despair? Do you really believe that the abundant life is better than what this world has to offer?

**challenge**

God had miraculously brought the Children of Israel out of Canaan and promised them a fruitful land. Yet when the Israelites saw some obstacles, they wished they were back in slavery in Egypt. This sounds absurd to us, but do we ever have a similar response? Recall from where God has rescued you. Don't desire to go back to your former ways; have faith to move on to the more abundant blessings the Lord has for you.

**memorize**

*"Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" Numbers 14:3*

*"Do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land...their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us." Numbers 14:9*

**Numbers 14:20-45**

**The Pronouncement of the Lord that Because of Unbelief the Children of Israel would Die in the Wilderness and not Enter the Promised Land and the Futile Attempt of the Children of Israel to Enter the Land in their Own Strength**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. Entrance into the Land cannot be obtained when there is unbelief.
2. Entrance into the Land cannot be obtained when there is presumption

**practical application**

Don't water down the Red Sea.

**questions**

1. How did God answer Moses' prayer?
2. Why did the Israelites have to be punished if their sins were forgiven?
3. Will any of the children of Israel, who died in the wilderness, be in heaven?
4. How does Ephesians 1:3 relate to this lesson?
5. How did the Israelites sin by trying to conquer the Land?

**answers**

1. He forgave the children of Israel, and did not wipe them out because of their sin.
2. They had to face the consequences of their forgiven sin.
3. Yes. Their sin of unbelief kept them from entering the Land. But they had believed in God for salvation earlier.
4. The Israelites had believed in the one true God, but they did not believe His promise of blessing and provision. God has given us, as Christians, "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." But we must choose to accept and take advantage of these blessings.
5. They sinned by presuming upon God. They presumed He would help them in their battle, although Moses warned He would not be with them.

**discuss/consider**

1. Although the Lord forgave the Israelites, they had to face the consequences for their sin by wandering in the wilderness. There are consequences for forgiven sin. Discuss this issue. Have you seen it to be true in your life? How has God graciously enabled you to handle the consequences of your forgiven sin?
2. Read Ephesians 1 and list the spiritual blessings that God has given us in Christ.

If you have believed on the Lord Jesus as your savior, these blessings are yours for the taking! Are you accepting the blessings and living like they are true? Remember, "Entrance into the Land cannot be obtained when there is unbelief."

**challenge**

Do you accept the miracles of God recorded in the Bible? He is the almighty God – don't explain away His miracles to make them "more viable." Take God at His word. Don't water down the Red Sea.

**memorize**

*"The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness." Numbers 14:29*

*"But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed from the camp." Numbers 14:44*

## Numbers 15

### Some Further Old Testament Laws Concerning the Offerings; Laws Concerning Unintentional and Defiant Sins; and the Law Concerning Tassels on the Fringe of Garments

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. God deals graciously with the unintentional sins of His people.
2. God deals justly with the defiant sins of His people.

#### practical application

Do whatever it takes to remember God's Word.

#### questions

1. Why were these supplemental grain and drink offerings added to the list of Israelite offerings?
2. How were these offerings a "sweet aroma to the LORD"?
3. What is a sin of commission? What is a sin of omission?
4. Why was a man stoned for gathering sticks on the Sabbath?
5. Why were the Israelites to put tassels on the corners of their garments?

6. What did the blue thread on the tassels symbolize?

**answers**

1. This was a way for the Israelites to show their thankfulness for the productivity of their new Land.
2. When these offerings were given as an act of worship, they were pleasing to the Lord.
3. A sin of commission is when you sin by something that you do. A sin of omission is a sin because you neglected to do something.
4. Because he defiantly and presumptuously broke God's law.
5. When they saw the tassels they would be reminded of God's commandments and their responsibility to obey them.
6. The blue thread symbolized the heavenly origin of God's law.

**discuss/consider**

1. God graciously provided a way for the Israelites to atone for unintentional sins. This way was with a blood sacrifice. What does this tell us about unintentional sin? We all sin unintentionally today. As soon you become aware of the sin, what should you do?
2. The Israelites put tassels on the corners of their garments to remind themselves of God's commandments and their responsibility to obey them. Do you have a method of constantly reminding yourself of God's Word? The best way to remember God's Word is to memorize Scripture. Have you ever been impressed by the importance of hiding God's Word in your heart?

**challenge**

The Israelites were instructed to give their firstfruits to the Lord. This is a lesson for us to give our "firsts" to the Lord. How can you give the Lord the first of your time, money, and talent? Are you just giving Him your leftovers?

**memorize**

*"So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally...and it shall be forgiven him." Numbers 15:28*

*"But the person who does anything presumptuously...shall be cut off from among his people." Numbers 15:30*

*"And you shall have the tassel...that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God." Numbers 15:39-40*

**Lesson 20**

**Numbers 16:1-24**

**Another Sin of the Wilderness: The Rebellion of Korah**

**background notes**

1.

2.

3.

**doctrinal points**

1. The sin of contempt results from rebellion in the human heart.
2. The sin of contempt results in severe discipline from the Lord.

**practical application**

Accept the position that God has given you.

**questions**

1. Who were Korah and his companions rebelling against?
2. Why are the false teachers of Jude 11 likened to the rebellion of Korah?
3. Review the Tree of Pride which depicts the Sins of the Wilderness.
4. What did the rebels accuse Moses of doing?
5. How did Moses seek to show that he and Aaron had divine authority?
6. Did the Lord accept the offering of Korah and his companions?

**answers**

1. They were rebelling against God by rebelling against the authority structure He had set up in Moses and Aaron.
2. The rebellion of Korah was a rebellion against God's authority, just as the false teachers in the early church.
3.
  - The Branch of Discontent has Leaves of Complaining – Numbers 11
  - The Branch of Jealousy has Leaves of Criticism – Numbers 12
  - The Branch of Unbelief has Leaves of Compromise – Numbers 13-14
  - The Branch of Rebellion has Leaves of Contempt- Numbers 16
4. They accused Him of blinding the people to the truth, and acting like a prince over them.
5. He proposed a test in which Korah and his companions would present burning incense in censers to the Lord, a function of the priests. The Lord Himself would show who the true priests were.
6. No, He intended to strike them dead because of their rebellion and presumption.

**discuss/consider**

1. Discuss what it means to show contempt for someone. Why would the sin of contempt come from a rebellious heart? Discuss the authority structures God has placed in your life. Are you showing proper respect to these authorities?
2. Discuss how Moses and Aaron are types of Christ as they intercede for the people. Aaron as High Priest is a type of Christ as our High Priest. Moses as mediator is a type of Christ as the only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).

**challenge**

God had given Korah and the other Levites an honorable position in Israel. But Korah was unsatisfied with the position God had given him. What positions has God given you- in your family, your work, your ministry? Are you filling these positions to the best of your abilities and thankfully serving Him?

**memorize**

*"Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel?" Numbers 16:9*

*"Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD." Numbers 16:11*

*"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." 1 Samuel 15:23*

**Numbers 16:25-50**

**The Record of God's Judgment of Those Involved in the Rebellion of Korah**

**background notes**

1.

2.

3.

**doctrinal points**

1. God removes believers who persist in the sin of rebellion.
2. God reminds believers of the consequences of the sin of rebellion.

**practical application**

Thank the Lord that He stands between the dead and the living.

**questions**

1. What is behind the surface sin of contempt?
2. Why are these sins of the wilderness recorded?
3. Give an example of sin that can lead to death.
4. What did Eleazar the priest do with the bronze incense censers of the rebellious men?
5. Why did God say again that He would wipe out the children of Israel?
6. Did God consume all the people with the plague?

**answers**

1. The deeper sin of rebellion is behind the surface sin of contempt.
2. They are a warning for us, lest we commit the same sins and miss out on the blessings God has for us. See 1 Corinthians 10:1-13.
3. Rebellion against God's authority structure
4. He hammered them into plates to cover the altar, as a reminder to the people that only descendants of Aaron could offer incense before the Lord. It also reminded them that God must judge the sin of rebellion.
5. Because the day after He had judged the sin of Korah, the people accused Moses and Aaron of killing these "people of the Lord."
6. No, Aaron ran to offer incense to the Lord as an atonement for the people, and the plague stopped.

**discuss/consider**

1. God removes believers who persist in the sin of rebellion. This was true during the time of the wilderness wandering, and it is true today. Read 1 Corinthians 11:29-32 and 1 John 5:16-17. Why does God do this? Is God just in doing this?
2. When a believer rebelliously sins, God will hammer out the consequences of that sin, so His people will see the consequences and remember that God punishes the sin of rebellion. Think of an example from your own life. How has your experience benefited others? Have you been willing to teach them from your mistakes? Remember that God can work all things for the good of those who love Him. (Romans 8:28) Share how your life is a testimony of this!

**challenge**

Aaron standing between the dead and the living is a picture of our Lord Jesus as High Priest. If you are a believer, you have been delivered from the dead and are now in the company of the living, because of Christ's atoning work on the cross. Thank the Lord that He stands between the dead and the living.

**memorize**

*"The censers of these men who sinned against their own souls, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar...they shall be a sign to the children of Israel." Numbers 16:38*

*"And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped." Numbers 16:48*

## Numbers 17

### God's Vindication of Aaron and His Validation of the Aaronic Priesthood

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. God's leaders are divinely chosen for the congregation.
2. God's leaders should be recognized by the congregation.

#### practical application

Let's be triple-B believers.

#### questions

1. Review what happened in the previous chapter, Numbers 16.
2. What was the purpose of the activities in Numbers 17?
3. What three items were kept in the Ark of the Covenant?
4. Review how God revealed that Aaron was divinely chosen for priesthood.
5. What was the people's response when they saw Aaron's rod that budded?
6. What does it mean to be a triple-B believer?

**answers**

1. The last chapter recorded the rebellion of Korah. Korah and his followers did not respect Moses' leadership and did not recognize Aaron's priesthood. They were not satisfied being Levites; they wanted to be priests. The Lord punished these rebels with an earthquake and fire.
2. God shows that Aaron was indeed the high priest, and the priesthood would come through his line, by divine appointment.
3. Tablets containing the Law, a pot full of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded
4. Moses gathered twelve rods from the leaders of the tribes of Israel. Aaron's rod represented the tribe of Levi. Moses placed these rods before the Lord in the tabernacle. God showed which leader He had chosen by causing that man's rod to come to life and bear fruit. Aaron's rod was the only rod that budded.
5. They recognized that God had appointed Aaron to the high priesthood. They feared for their lives, because they had previously questioned God's chosen leadership.
6. This principle is based on what happened to Aaron's rod- it budded, blossomed, and bore fruit. This was a spiritual picture of the believer with new life in Christ (Ephesians 2:1). We are to bear spiritual fruit, the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5).

**discuss/consider**

1. God appointed the spiritual leaders in the nation of Israel. He continues to make spiritual leaders in His Church today. In Acts 20:28, Paul told the elders of the church of Ephesus that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers. God made them spiritual leaders; it was up to the church to recognize them as such. Discuss how we are to recognize God's chosen leaders in the church today.

**challenge**

Hebrews 13:17 exhorts us to obey those who rule over us, so that they can do their job with joy and not with grief. Are you making your elders joyful, or are you causing contentions and arguments that are grievous to them?

**memorize**

*"And it shall be that the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel." Numbers 17:5*

*"The rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds." Numbers 17:8*

*"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you." Hebrews 13:17*

**Lesson 23**

**Numbers 18**

**The Awesome Responsibilities of the Priests and Levites and the Support of the Priests and Levites**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. God provides for the needs of His priests.
2. God provides for the needs of His servants.

**practical application**

1. Don't forget the tithe of the tithe.
2. Use all your money for the glory of God.

**questions**

1. Whose descendants were the priests in Israel?
2. What responsibility of the priests and the Levites did God emphasize here?
3. How did God provide for the needs of the priests?
4. What were heave and wave offerings?
5. Who are God's priests today?
6. How did God provide for the needs of the rest of the Levites?
7. Is it necessary for people in full-time ministry to tithe from their income?

**answers**

1. All the priests in Israel were descendants from Aaron.
2. He emphasized their awesome responsibility of protecting the tabernacle and the holy things from defilement.
3. All of the offerings or parts of offerings that were not burned up were given to the priests. The firstfruits were also given to the priests. Any object that an Israelite devoted to the Lord (such as a wagon), was given to the priests. And they received money from any item which was redeemed (Leviticus 27), including every firstborn child and unclean animal.
4. These offerings were so named because they were literally lifted up and waved before the Lord.
5. All believers are God's priests. See 1 Peter 2:5.
6. The rest of the Levites were provided for by the tithes of the people.
7. Yes, see the example of the Levites giving a "tithe of the tithe" in Numbers 18:26.

**discuss/consider**

1. The priests and Levites in Israel had the awesome responsibility of protecting the tabernacle and the holy things from defilement. We believers also have a responsibility as priests and servants today to protect the sacred things of the Lord. Discuss how you can promote reverence of the things of God. How can you encourage others to honor the Lord?
2. God provides for the spiritual needs of His priests today through the Lord Jesus Christ. Discuss the spiritual provisions you have been given in the Lord. Likewise, God takes care of the physical needs of His servants today. He does this primarily through the tithes and gifts of His people. Read Galatians 6:6. Have you made giving to the Lord's servants a priority in your budget?

**challenge**

After you tithe a portion of your money to the Lord, you may use the rest as you choose. But you should not do anything with the remainder of your money that would dishonor God. Use all your money to the glory of God. Ask yourself this week – Have I given a portion of my money to the Lord? Am I glorifying Him with the remainder of it?

**memorize**

*"I give your priesthood to you as a gift for service." Numbers 18:7*

*"Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform." Numbers 18:21*

## Numbers 19

### The Details of the Red Heifer Sacrifice

#### background notes

1.

2.

3.

#### doctrinal points

1. The red heifer sacrifice purified the unclean people in Israel.
2. The red heifer sacrifice pictures the cleansing work of Christ.

#### practical application

Be extremely careful when you sprinkle the ashes.

#### questions

1. What is a red heifer?
2. Discuss the modern debate involving the red heifer.
3. What was the purpose of the red heifer sacrifice?
4. Review the process of the red heifer sacrifice.
5. How does Hebrews 9:13-14 relate to this passage?

**answers**

1. A heifer is young, female cow, slightly older than a calf. Red heifers, with reddish-brown hair are a rare breed.
2. Some Christians say the sacrificial system in Israel cannot begin again until the lost ashes of the red heifer and the Ark of the Covenant are found. There is no scriptural basis for this claim. There have also been reports of red heifers being bred in northern Israel, but these reports are speculative.
3. It provided cleansing for anyone who had been defiled by touching a dead body or anything unclean.
4. The heifer was killed and burned outside the camp. The ashes of the red heifer were then kept in a container in a clean place outside the camp. When anyone or anything was defiled, ashes were mixed in a vessel with running water. This water was sprinkled on the unclean person or object.
5. Hebrews 9:13-14 tells us that Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices, including the red heifer sacrifice, because His sacrificial death can cleanse even our consciences from sin.

**discuss/consider**

1. The red heifer sacrifice purified the unclean people in Israel. This chapter pictures the truth that God is holy. What is unclean and defiled must be judged. But God in His grace has provided a way of purification. Today, our sins are forgiven and we are cleansed when we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Still, as Christians we need constant cleansing from the defilement of sin. Discuss the ways for Christians to be purified today. Refer to Ephesians 5:26, 2 Corinthians 7:1, and 1 John 1:7.
2. Review the many detailed ways in which the red heifer sacrifice pictures Christ as the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

**challenge**

As believers we are accountable to help our brothers and sisters deal with the defiling effect of sin in their lives by applying the cleansing effect of the Word. But we must be careful that we do not fall into the same sin (Galatians 6:1).

**memorize**

*"Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer...for purifying from sin." Numbers 19:9*

*"For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Hebrews 9:13-14*

## Numbers 20

### The Death of Miriam, the Failure of Moses and Aaron, the death of Aaron, and the Refusal of Edom to let Israel Pass Through their Land

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. The discipline of Moses was for his irreverence.
2. The death of Aaron was for his rebellion.

#### practical application

Let's flee the flesh.

#### questions

1. How much time passed between Numbers chapter 19 and chapter 20?
2. What happened during this time?
3. How did Moses sin in this chapter?
4. Was God too harsh in His punishment of Moses?
5. How did God punish Moses for his irreverence?
6. Who were the Edomites? What do they spiritually picture?

**answers**

1. About 38 years
2. The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness because of their sin of unbelief.
3. God instructed him to speak to a rock to provide water for the people. Instead, Moses chastised the people and struck the rock twice out of anger.
4. No, Moses was God's representative, and by disobeying God's instruction he showed irreverence.
5. Moses was not allowed to lead the people into the Promised Land or enter the Land himself.
6. The Edomites were descendants of Esau, a "man of the flesh." Throughout the Old Testament the Edomites are a spiritual picture of the flesh in its lustful activities.

**discuss/consider**

1. Numbers 20 begins with the Israelites in Kadesh, from where they had sent out the spies 38 years earlier. They had not gotten very far in their wanderings. The same is true of our Christian walk. We will not get very far if we get bogged down by the sins of the wilderness. Review those sins and evaluate your success in those areas since this study began.
2. God's plan was for Israel to bypass the nation of Edom on their way to the Promised Land. This is a picture of us fleeing from fleshly lusts. Discuss this principle of fleeing the flesh, rather than fighting the flesh. Refer to 2 Timothy 2:22.

**challenge**

This sad chapter is full of failure on the part of Moses, Aaron, and the rest of the Israelites. When Moses disobeyed God's simple command, it showed his underlying irreverence for God. Commit this week to obey God's simple commands to you. If you are struggling with disobedience in this area, ask God how you can grow in reverence for Him.

**memorize**

*"Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." Numbers 20:12*

*"Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain." Numbers 20:28*

**Numbers 21:1-9**

**Israel's Defeat of the King of Arad and The Bronze Serpent being Lifted Up on a Pole in the Wilderness**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. Lifting up the bronze serpent is a picture of substitution.
2. Looking at the bronze serpent is a picture of salvation.
  - a) It was the only way to be healed.
  - b) Looking at the bronze serpent did not involve human works.
  - c) God's way of healing in the wilderness was available to everyone, but only effective to the individuals that looked.

**practical application**

Look and live.

**questions**

1. Why did the King of Arad think that he would be victorious fighting against the Israelites?
2. Why did the Israelites receive the victory this time?
3. Why are the children of Israel complaining again in this chapter?
4. How did God punish the people for complaining?
5. What way did God provide for the people to be saved from the serpent bites?

**answers**

1. Because almost forty years earlier the Israelites had been defeated by the Amalekites and the Canaanites.
2. Previously they wrongly tried to enter the Land in their own strength. This time they sought the Lord, and He heard their prayer.
3. Because they traveled the long way around Edom and became tired and discouraged.
4. He sent fiery serpents into their midst.
5. He directed Moses to construct a bronze serpent and raise it up on a pole. Whoever looked to the bronze serpent would be saved from the poison and would not die.

**discuss/consider**

1. The principle, "Like father, like son," can be seen in this chapter. The previous generation of Israelites had been punished for complaining, and here we see their children complaining against the Lord as well. Discuss the way children grow up to imitate their parents, both for good and bad. How can you begin a new pattern with your family?
2. Discuss the bronze serpent as a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus as our sin-bearer on the cross. List the many parallels and lessons about the doctrine of salvation.

**challenge**

Have you looked to the Lord Jesus Christ as your only means of salvation? Trusting in Christ's death for your sins is the only way for you to have eternal life. Look and live.

**memorize**

*"And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites." Numbers 21:3*

*"We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." Numbers 21:7*

*"If a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived." Numbers 21:9*

**Numbers 21:10-35**

**The Defeat of Sihon and Og King of the Amorites on the East Side of the Jordan River,  
Before Israel Crossed Over and Conquered Jericho**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. Moving forward results in singing.
2. Moving forward results in victory.

**practical application**

Just dig a little deeper.

**questions**

1. Why did the Israelites travel around the land of Edom?
2. What other nations had God commanded the Israelites not to fight?
3. Who are the Amorites?
4. Why were the Israelites singing in this chapter?
5. What did the Israelites do after they conquered the cities of the Amorites?
6. What was the Book of the Wars of the LORD?

**answers**

1. The Edomites refused to allow the Israelites to pass through their land. Rather than fight the Edomites, the Lord led His people around them. The Edomites were descendants of Esau, and therefore related to the Israelites.
2. The people of Moab and Ammon, because they were descendants of Lot.
3. The Amorites were Canaanites, and therefore people that God had commanded the Israelites to destroy.
4. Because they were no longer wandering. They were moving forward to a place where God provided water.
5. They dwelt in those conquered cities.
6. It was a book containing battle accounts and songs from the Israelites' conquest of Canaan. It was not inspired Scripture and is not available to us today.

**discuss/consider**

1. The Israelites sang to the Lord when they began moving forward toward the Land. Another reason to sing was the water God provided for them. Have you ever had a song to the Lord well up in your heart? Singing comes naturally when you are moving forward in the Christian life. Discuss the role of singing in the Christian life and in your life specifically.
2. When you are moving forward in your walk with the Lord, you will encounter battles, but not defeat. It has been said that in the Christian life you are always moving forward or moving backward. You cannot expect to stay neutral in your walk, without progressing or regressing. How can you ensure you are moving forward in your walk with the Lord, so that you will have victory?

**challenge**

The Holy Spirit and the Word of God work together to accomplish God's purposes in a believer's life. Have you dug into God's Word to reach the refreshment it contains? Spend some time in the Word this week and allow the Holy Spirit to refresh you through it.

**memorize**

*"The LORD said to Moses, 'Gather the people together, and I will give them water.' Then Israel sang this song: 'Spring up, O well! All of you sing to it.'" Numbers 21:16-17*

*"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Do not fear [Og king of Bashan], for I have delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.'" Numbers 21:34*

## Numbers 22

### The Attempt of Balak, King of Moab, to Hire Balaam, a Diviner from Mesopotamia, to Curse Israel

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. The enemy will try to prevent God from blessing His people.
2. The enemy cannot prevent God from blessing His people.

#### practical application

You must do more than just say, "I have sinned."

#### questions

1. Who was Balak and why was he afraid?
2. Why did the Moabites not need to fear the Israelites?
3. Who was Balaam?
4. Should Balaam be remembered as a good guy or a bad guy?
5. Does God ever curse His people?

**answers**

1. Balak was the pagan king of Moab. He was afraid because he heard how the Israelites had defeated the Amorite kingdoms of Sidon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan. He thought the Moabites were next.
2. God had told the Israelites not to conquer Moab, because the Moabites were descendants of Lot, and therefore related to the Israelites.
3. Balaam was a pagan diviner whom Balak hired to curse the Israelites.
4. He could perhaps be considered a good guy, because he eventually blessed Israel at God's command. On the other hand, he did not intend to be a prophet of the one true God, and he hired himself out to curse people. The New Testament refers to Balaam negatively (2 Peter 2:15-16 and Revelation 2:14).
5. No, God does not curse His people. He may punish His people, but the goal of His punishment is always to bring His people into right relationship with Him, so He can bless them.

**discuss/consider**

1. Satan hates to see God's people blessed. He always tries to prevent God from blessing His people, then and today. Discuss the numerous ways in which Satan has tried to curse the nation of Israel throughout history. He has tried to destroy the Jews from Egypt to the Holocaust.
2. The enemy cannot prevent God from blessing His people. Despite the devil's schemes, God pours out abundant blessings on His children. Discuss the ways in which God has blessed you, as one of many believers and as an individual.

**challenge**

Balaam sounds repentant after his encounter with the Angel of the Lord (Numbers 22:30-35). But He never committed himself to the Lord. We know this by the rest of his actions in Numbers and the record of him in the rest of the Bible. Have you not only admitted you are a sinner, but also accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior? Jesus took the punishment for your sins on the cross. Don't let today pass without believing this.

**memorize**

*"Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel." Numbers 22:3*

*"Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way." Numbers 22:31*

*"They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." 2 Peter 2:15*

## Numbers 23-24

### The Four Oracles of Balaam

#### background notes

1.

2.

3.

#### doctrinal points

1. The oracles of Balaam predicted Israel's covenant blessing.

2. The oracles of Balaam predicted Israel's coming Messiah.

#### practical application

You never know how God may use your personal quiet time.

#### questions

1. Why did Balaam direct Balak to set up seven altars with sacrifices?

2. Did Balaam become a believer in the true God in this account?

3. Where is the Messiah referred to in Balaam's oracles?

4. Balaam predicts the destruction of "Asshur" in Numbers 24:22. Who are these people?

**answers**

1. This was Balaam's attempt to appease the mighty God of Israel, so he could curse the people.
2. No, although he blessed Israel, it was through the intervention of God. The negative accounts of him in the New Testament imply he did not truly commit himself to the Lord.
3. Numbers 24:17
4. This refers to the Assyrians.

**discuss/consider**

1. God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham and his descendants. That covenant is again confirmed by the oracles of Balaam. Review the promises of this covenant. Discuss how this unconditional covenant is still in effect today
2. All throughout the Old Testament, God foretells the Messiah He would send. Many of these prophecies were not understood until they were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christ is the Greek word for Messiah, God's "Anointed One."

**challenge**

You never know how God may use your personal quiet time. He may use it to give you insight into some Scripture that would benefit a fellow believer. He can certainly use it to strengthen your faith. Are you allowing the Lord to minister to you through your quiet time?

**memorize**

*"How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? And how shall I denounce whom the LORD has not denounced?" Numbers 23:8*

*"Balak said to Balaam, 'I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed them these three times!'"  
Numbers 24:10*

*"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel." Numbers 24:17*

Numbers 25-26

**The Sin of Israel in Joining Themselves to Baal of Peor and  
The Second Numbering of the Children of Israel**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. Divine justice requires firm and timely discipline.
2. Divine justice includes the discipline of death.

**practical application**

Expect Satan to use sex as a snare.

**questions**

1. How do the oracles of Balaam indirectly affirm a high view of the inspiration of Scripture?
2. What sin was Israel practicing in Numbers 25?
3. Who suggested to the Moabites that they entice the Israelites into idol worship and sexual immorality?
4. What was the consequence of Israel's sin?
5. Who was Phinehas, and how was he rewarded?
6. When did this second numbering of the people take place?
7. What was the purpose of this second numbering?

**answers**

1. Moses must have received the details of Balaam's oracles, down to the very words, by direct revelation from the Lord.
2. They were involved in the sin of worshipping Baal of Peor, one of the gods of the Moabites. This pagan worship involved sexual immorality.
3. Balaam the diviner.
4. God sent a plague that killed 24,000 Israelites.
5. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was a priest. He saw one of the Israelites committing sexual sin with a Midianite woman and with righteous judgment, killed them. The Lord rewarded his zeal by promising the priesthood would come through his line.
6. After the plague at Baal Peor. Remember, this is the second generation of Israelites. The first generation all died in the wilderness for their sin.
7. Beyond military purposes, this census would determine the amount of land allotted to the tribes once they had conquered Canaan.

**discuss/consider**

1. Divine justice requires firm and timely discipline. Just as Phinehas was willing to accept this responsibility, so church leaders are responsible for discipline in the church today. Discuss the state of church discipline today. One problem is when someone is disciplined in their church, rather than accepting that discipline, they will leave and go to another church. This is not God's design.
2. Numbers 26 records a census of the second generations of Israelites. The first generations had died in the wilderness as discipline for their sin of unbelief. God sometimes uses the discipline of death on believers today. Discuss the places where this discipline is mentioned in the New Testament.

**challenge**

In Numbers 25, the Israelites stepped beyond God's ordained design for sex, and committed sexual immorality with the Midianites. This was a satanic scheme to remove the people from God's blessing. Satan continues to use this effective scheme today. Pray for the leaders of your church that they will not fall into this snare.

**memorize**

*"Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab." Numbers 25:1*

*"But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai...except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun." Numbers 26: 64-65*

## Numbers 27

### A Question Concerning the Law of Inheritance Resolved and Joshua Appointed as the New Leader of the Children of Israel

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. God listens to the logic of His people.
2. The Lord provides and prepares new leaders for His people.

#### practical application

Let's have a transition attitude like Moses.

#### questions

1. What was the purpose of the second numbering of the children of Israel?
2. How was the land to be allotted within the tribes?
3. What was the objection of Zelophehad's family?
4. What new laws of inheritance were developed on account of Zelophehad's daughters?
5. Why was Moses not allowed to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land?
6. What were the Urim and the Thummin?

**answers**

1. The census was taken for military reasons and to determine the allotment of the land between the tribes.
2. It would be subdivided to the adult males in the tribe.
3. Zelophehad, of the tribe of Manasseh, had no sons. His five daughters beseeched Moses to give them an inheritance in the Land.
4. If a man had no sons, his inheritance would go to his daughters. If a man had no children, his inheritance would go to his brothers. If a man had no brothers, his inheritance would go to his uncles. If a man had no uncles, his inheritance would go to his next of kin.
5. Because of his irreverence at the waters of Meribah.
6. They were probably precious gems, which were used by the priests in the decision making process.

**discuss/consider**

1. Many people have a view of God as an unreasonable, uncompassionate tyrant. But as Christians, we know we can come to Him with our requests. Discuss Matthew 7:7-11 in this connection. Go to the Lord with your case; He listens to the logic of His people.
2. Before Moses died he was to pass some of his responsibility on to Joshua. Discuss the transition of leadership in your local church. Are the older men willing to train and pass on responsibility to the younger men? Are the younger men stepping up to fulfill the roles and learn from their elders?

**challenge**

The case with Zelophehad's daughters shows the high value the Lord places on women. Have you realized Scripture's high view of women, or have you bought into what culture says about God's view of women?

**memorize**

*"So Moses brought their case before the LORD." Numbers 27:5*

*"And you shall give some of your authority to [Joshua], that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient." Numbers 27:20*

**A Summary of All of Israel's Required Sacrifices and Offerings to be Brought Before the Lord During Israel's Calendar Year**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. The Old Testament sacrifices showed the necessity of shed blood for salvation.
2. The Old Testament sacrifices showed the necessity of shed blood for fellowship.

**practical application**

Do you have a time of worship every day?

**questions**

1. Why was a summary of Israel's sacrifices given here?
2. List the required daily offerings of the children of Israel.
3. How did these required offerings throughout the year relate to the individual offerings of the Israelites?
4. Why were so many sacrifices required?
5. Did these animal sacrifices take away sin?
6. What was the key to successful and happy living in the Land of Promise?

**answers**

1. Because the second generation of Israelites was about to enter the Promised Land. The basis for their covenant relationship with the Lord and continued fellowship with Him was not to be forgotten.
2. One male lamb in the morning and evening, a drink offering and grain offering mixed with oil in the morning.
3. These required offerings were in addition to the individual offerings of the people.
4. These sacrifices not only showed the seriousness of sin, but also that the penalty of sin is death.
5. No, they pointed forward to the great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ that would take away sin. The animal sacrifices temporarily covered the sin, until Jesus Christ permanently paid for the sin on the cross.
6. Continued fellowship with God through offering sacrifices

**discuss/consider**

1. Discuss the necessity of shed blood for salvation. Discuss the spiritual picture made by the blood sacrifices in the Old Testament. Read Hebrews 10:1-4, 11-12.
2. The Old Testament sacrifices showed the necessity of shed blood for fellowship.

Because of the sacrifice of Christ, we can have not only salvation, but also fellowship with God, because the sin barrier has been removed. Discuss this concept of fellowship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

**challenge**

Every day in Israel there was time set aside to thank and praise the Lord. Commit to a time of worship every day this week. Be creative – your time may be in the shower or on your drive to work. Set a regular time to worship God every day.

**memorize**

*"Command the children of Israel, and say to them, 'My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me, you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time'" Numbers 28:2*

*"It shall be offered besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering." Numbers 28:24*

## Numbers 30

### Several Laws Concerning the Taking of Vows- When a Law was Valid and When a Law Could be Annulled

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. God expects His structure of authority for the family to be honored.
2. God expects the vows people make to be honored.

#### practical application

Don't make rash vows.

#### questions

1. Explain the Law of Consecration or Dedication.
2. Was there ever a time when a dedication could be invalidated or annulled?
3. How were the laws different for men and women?
4. What was the law concerning the vows of widows and divorced women?
5. List the areas of God-given authority.
6. What is God's line of authority in the home?

**answers**

1. Any man or woman in Israel could make a vow of dedication of their material possessions to the Lord (Leviticus 27). If they chose to continue to use that possession, they could redeem it by paying its market value plus twenty percent. Furthermore a person could dedicate himself or herself to the Lord (Numbers 6).
2. Yes, these situations are outlined in Numbers 30.
3. If a man took a vow of dedication, that vow was binding – it could not be annulled. A woman's vow was also binding unless it was annulled by her father or husband.
4. The vows of widows and divorced women were binding.
5. There is God-given authority in the family, the state, and the church.
6. The children are to be subordinate to the parents. And the wife is to be subordinate to the husband.

**discuss/consider**

1. This chapter addresses God's authority structure within the family. It is clearly seen here and elsewhere that children are to be subordinate to the parents and the wife is to be subordinate to the husband. Discuss this structure within today's society. Remember, subordination does not mean inferiority. The Lord Jesus was subordinate to God the Father, but in no way inferior to Him (1 Corinthians 11:3).
2. Review the account in this chapter and the principle it teaches. Discuss: Godly commitments of time and talents to the Lord must be subject to God-given roles and responsibilities within the family.

**challenge**

Have you made a vow before the Lord? Perhaps a vow of marriage or a vow of daily time with the Lord? Recommit yourself to your vows this week. God expects the vows people make to be honored.

**memorize**

*"If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth." Numbers 30:2*

*"These are the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, and between a father and his daughter in her youth in her father's house." Numbers 30:16*

## Numbers 31

### The Defeat of the Midianites by the Children of Israel as an Act of God's Vengeance

#### background notes

1.

2.

3.

#### doctrinal points

1. The defeat of the Midianites was the Lord's vengeance on Midian.
2. The defeat of the Midianites was the Lord's provision for Israel.

#### practical application

Why not give more than what is required?

#### questions

1. What was Moses' last official act before he died?
2. Why did the Israelites go to war against the Midianites?
3. Why was Balaam the diviner killed during this battle?
4. If all the Midianite men and boys were executed at this time (Numbers 31:17), how were there Midianites alive 200 years later to fight Gideon?
5. Why were the virgin girls of Midian left alive?
6. How was the booty or plunder from the war divided?

**answers**

1. Leading the children of Israel in battle against the Midianites
2. Because the Midianites joined the Moabites in seducing Israel to sin (Numbers 25).
3. In chapter 24 Balaam returned to Mesopotamia, after unsuccessfully attempting to curse the Israelites. Apparently he then returned to king Balak of Moab and counseled him to have the Moabite and Midianite women seduce the men of Israel. For his counsel he was killed during the battle.
4. This was possibly only one of several clans of Midianites, or possibly the Israelites did not carry out the executions as they were commanded.
5. Because they had not participated in the fornication at Peor.
6. The plunder was equally divided between the Israelites who had gone to war and those who had remained behind.

**discuss/consider**

1. In this chapter the Lord sought revenge on the Midianites for leading His people astray at Peor. Discuss the concept of allowing God to take the revenge. Read Romans 12:19. Sometimes His vengeance will not be as apparent as the defeat of the Midianites. How can we have faith to leave the vengeance to Him?
2. Discuss the biblical principle of equally dividing the booty of war between those who fought and those who remained behind. Serving the Lord behind the scenes is just as important as serving the Lord on the front lines. Each one is responsible to do what the Lord has called him to do. Then we all share in the blessings of the Lord's work.

**challenge**

The captains of the Israelite army brought an extra offering to the Lord as thanks for His protection during the battle. Do you have this same attitude? If the Lord has blessed you recently, why not give more than what is required as a gift of thanks to Him?

**memorize**

*"Arm some of yourselves for war, and let them go against the Midianites to take vengeance for the LORD on Midian." Numbers 31:3*

*"Divide the plunder into two parts, between those who took part in the war, who went out to battle, and all the congregation." Numbers 31:27*

*"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord." Romans 12:19*

**Numbers 32:1-19**

**The Request of the Tribes of Reuben and Gad to Settle on the East Side  
of the Jordan River, Rather than Dwell with the Rest of the Twelve Tribes of Israel  
on the West Side of the Jordan River**

**background notes**

1.

2.

3.

**doctrinal points**

1. God desires His people to cross the Jordan.
2. God does not force His people to cross the Jordan.

**practical application**

Beware of too many cattle.

**questions**

1. Summarize the status of the Israelites at the beginning of Numbers 32.
2. What is the request of the tribes of Reuben and Gad?
3. How does 1 Corinthians 10:11 relate to this lesson?
4. What is a "type"?
5. What is crossing the Jordan a type of?
6. What is the heavenlies?

**answers**

1. The Israelites were gathered on the plains of Moab. This second generation was ready to cross the Jordan and begin the conquest of the Promised Land. A considerable amount of land had already been conquered on the east side of the Jordan.
2. These two tribes requested to be allowed to remain on the east side of the Jordan River and establish their dwellings there, rather than cross into the Promised Land with the other tribes.
3. 1 Corinthians 10:11 says that all the things that happened to the Israelites, including this situation with Reuben and Gad, were given as an example or type to us as believers.
4. A type is an Old Testament person, place, thing, or event which illustrates a New Testament truth. The journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan is a type of the Christian's spiritual life.
5. Crossing the Jordan is a spiritual picture of a believer crossing into the heavenlies.
6. The heavenlies is the sphere of spiritual blessings and battles that God wants the believer to enter into now as a result of our new life in Christ.

**discuss/consider**

1. Discuss the spiritual picture presented by the two tribes that would not cross the Jordan. How are some believers not "crossing the Jordan"? This is a very applicable spiritual picture.
2. Moses was afraid the compromising attitude of the tribes of Reuben and Gad would discourage the rest of the tribes from entering the Promised Land. If you choose not to be a fully committed Christian, God will not force you. But consider the discouraging effect this has on fellow believers. Discuss the discouragement that results when one believer is not continuing in their Christian walk. It may have negative effects on that believer's spouse, children, and closest friends.

**challenge**

When the Lord is on your side, the enemy is no match. Although the Amorites and Midianites had considerable strength, they were no match for Israel, who had the Lord on their side. Is the Lord on your side?

**memorize**

*"If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan."  
Numbers 32:5*

*"Now why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them?" Numbers 32:7*

**Numbers 32:20-42**

**Moses Gives Permission to the Two-and-a-Half Tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the Half-Tribe of Manasseh, to Settle on the East Side of the Jordan River In Return for Their Promise to Help Conquer the Land on the West Side of the Jordan**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal points**

1. It is possible to practice partial obedience.
2. There is a price to pay for partial obedience.

**practical application**

Don't sin by breaking your agreement.

**questions**

1. Did the land God promised to Israel extend east of the Jordan River?
2. Who were the two-and-a-half tribes?
3. Why was it wrong for the two-and-a-half tribes to request to settle on the east side of the Jordan?
4. How did the two-and-a-half tribes practice partial obedience?
5. What were the negative results of the partial obedience of the two-and-a-half tribes?

**answers**

1. Yes, Deuteronomy 3:27-28 describes the land boundaries as west, north, south, and east of Mount Pisgah, on the east side of the Jordan River.
2. The tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh
3. God desired His people to be united and centered together on the west side of the Jordan in the heart of the land. They were to conquer the land east of the Jordan as an expansion of that.
4. They did not forsake the Lord or His people. They still wanted to be part of Israel. They were willing to fight to conquer the Promised Land. But for selfish reasons they were not fully committed to the will of the Lord.
5. They caused a huge misunderstanding with the other tribes, which almost prompted a civil war (Joshua 22). These tribes were also the first to be taken into captivity.

**discuss/consider**

1. Practicing partial obedience has negative consequences. Discuss the partial obedience of the two-and-a-half tribes. These "border land believers" had only half-hearted faith. Compare them to Lot who also made choices based on what he wanted for himself. These are examples of worldly believers who practice partial obedience. Discuss how partial obedience is really disobedience. Read 1 Samuel 15:22.
2. The two-and-a-half tribes that remained on the east side of the Jordan did not see the importance of living together with the other tribes on the west side of the Jordan. Living together as a nation would provide protection and unity. Relate this to the principle of Hebrews 10:25. What are the negative consequences of neglecting weekly fellowship with fellow believers?

**challenge**

Breaking an agreement you have made with another person is a sin. Have you made an agreement to help out in a ministry? Keep that commitment.

**memorize**

*"Be sure your sin will find you out." Numbers 32:23*

*"We will cross over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, but the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us on this side of the Jordan." Numbers 32:32*

## Numbers 33

### A Review of the Places the Children of Israel Camped in Their Journey from Egypt to Canaan and Further Instructions from the Lord Concerning the Conquest of the Land

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. God led His people to specific locations when they traveled in the wilderness.
2. God gave His people specific instructions when they entered into the Land.

#### practical application

Thank the Lord that even your wanderings are all under God's control.

#### questions

1. Can the route of the children of Israel be traced on a map?
2. Where did the children of Israel cross the Red Sea? Discuss this debate.
3. Who decided where the Israelites would camp during their journey in the wilderness?
4. What did God command the Israelites to do when they entered the Land?
5. Why did God order the Israelites to kill so many Canaanites?
6. What would happen if the Israelites did not follow God's instructions when they entered the Land?

**answers**

1. Their route can be partially traced. Some of the locations mentioned have not yet been identified by archeologists.
2. Some Christians have said that since "Red Sea" could be translated "Reed Sea" the "miracle" was only the Israelites crossing a marshy area. Where exactly on the Red Sea the Israelites crossed has not been confirmed.
3. God did. He led the Israelites with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.
4. They were to drive out all the inhabitants of the land, destroy all of the idolatrous images, and demolish all the idolatrous shrines on the high places.
5. Because He did not want His people polluted by the idolatrous influence of these pagan peoples.
6. They would be continually harassed and haunted by the Canaanites they did not drive out. Later in Israel's history we see that the Canaanites did influence them toward idolatry.

**discuss/consider**

1. Does God still specifically lead and guide His people today? Yes! Read Psalm 32:8 and Proverbs 3:5-6. Discuss the way we as Christians should approach decision-making if we know that God desires to lead us. Remember that God has given us our common sense and His word. God leads specifically. Are you willing to follow?
2. God commanded the Israelites to take drastic measures to clear the Land of evil, so they would not be influenced by the pagan inhabitants. Read Matthew 5:13-14 and 2 Corinthians 6:17. We as believers are also to be separate from evil in this world. Discuss the difficult balance between being separate from evil and being salt in this world.

**challenge**

Even though the Israelites were "wandering" in the wilderness, God was leading every move they made. Are you wandering in the wilderness of this life? Thank the Lord that your wanderings and testing in this life are used by Him to bring you blessing. Thank Him that He can cause all things to work together for good.

**memorize**

*"You shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess." Numbers 33:53*

*"But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land...they shall harass you in the land where you dwell." Numbers 33:55*

## Numbers 34

### The Lord Gives Israel the Boundaries of the Land they were to Possess and Names of Certain Men from the Twelve Tribes to Help Joshua and Eleazar the Priest Apportion the Land between the Twelve Tribes

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. God determined the boundaries of the Land of Israel.
2. God determined the territories for the tribes of Israel.

#### practical application

Let God determine your territory.

#### questions

1. Where were the Israelites at the beginning of Numbers 34?
2. How do these land boundaries compare the land boundaries promised to Abraham?
3. Why is there a difference between these land promises?
4. Has Israel ever occupied the entire land promised to them in the Abrahamic covenant?
5. Who determines the boundaries of nations?

**answers**

1. They were encamped in the Plains of Moab, waiting to cross the Jordan River and conquer the Land the Lord had given them.
2. These boundaries are not as extensive as those promised under the Abrahamic covenant.
3. The boundaries of Numbers 34 were the land the Israelites were supposed to conquer immediately (although they failed to do so). Under the reigns of David and Solomon, the borders of Israel extended a little beyond the boundaries given here.
4. No, but we believe they will occupy this land in the future, when they return to the Lord as a nation.
5. God does. See Numbers 32:8 and Acts 17:26.

**discuss/consider**

1. Throughout the history of the modern State of Israel there have been constant arguments over land boundaries with the surrounding Arab states. We know how these debates will end, because we read here of God's promise of land to Israel. Discuss when and how this land struggle will be settled.
2. God controlled which territories would go to which tribes. What seems like chance was actually determined by the Lord. Read Proverbs 16:33. He has given each of us as believers a spiritual allotment of spiritual gifts, talents, and opportunities. He expects us to possess this "territory" and use what He has given us. Are you satisfied with the territory God has given you? Do not try to encroach upon others' territories by taking a ministry God has not given to you.

**challenge**

Trace the allotment of land God promised to the children of Israel on a Bible map. Praise Him that He is a God who keeps His promises both to the nation of Israel and to you as a believer!

**memorize**

*"This shall be your land with its surrounding boundaries." Numbers 34:12*

*"These are the ones the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance among the children of Israel in the land of Canaan."  
Numbers 34:29*

## Numbers 35

### The Provision of Forty-Eight Cities Throughout the Land of Israel for the Levites, Including Six Cities of Refuge

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. God provided cities of rest for the Levites.
2. God provided cities of refuge for the people.

#### practical application

Can you point a person to the true city of refuge?

#### questions

1. Did the Israelites destroy the cities in the land they conquered?
2. Did the Tribe of Levi receive a territory of their own?
3. What is a city of refuge?
4. Did the Levites have to be working at the tabernacle at all times?
5. What was the responsibility of the Levites when they were home in their cities?

**answers**

1. No, they conquered the cities and lived in them. This was God's way of providing housing for the people (Deuteronomy 6).
2. No, the cities of the Levites were scattered throughout the Land.
3. They were places of refuge for anyone who had presumably killed someone accidentally until the courts could decide whether the killing was intentional or not.
4. No, the Levites had specific duties at the tabernacle. They would work hard while they were on duty, and then they would go home to rest.
5. They were responsible for keeping the people informed about God's laws.

**discuss/consider**

1. The Levitical cities spread throughout the Land picture the way churches and believers should be today. We need to be strategically scattered throughout the world as light and salt. We have the answers to people's questions! Are you readily available to share from the word of God with those who are seeking answers? Refer to 1 Peter 3:15.
2. Review the interesting law concerning the cities of refuge. Hebrews 6:18 indicates the city of refuge is a type of Christ as the true city of refuge for our souls. Even our unintentional sins must be atoned for by the death of our High Priest. Discuss the additional spiritual picture of Israel acting in ignorance in their rejection of the Messiah. The Lord is treating them as manslayers right now, rather than murderers.

**challenge**

In ancient Israel the way to a city of refuge was clearly marked. Today, the Bible clearly shows the way to Christ as the true city of refuge. If someone came to you for direction, could you use the Bible and point them to salvation?

**memorize**

*"Each shall give some of its cities to the Levites, in proportion to the inheritance that each receives." Numbers 35:8*

*"You shall appoint cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person accidentally may flee there." Numbers 35:11*

## Numbers 36

### An Additional Question Concerning Zelophehad's Daughters and Their Right to Inherit Property

#### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### doctrinal points

1. The women of Israel would inherit family property if they had no brothers.
2. The women of Israel would inherit family property if they married within their tribe.

#### practical application

Let's practice the faith and obedience of Zelophehad's daughters.

#### questions

1. Where and when did the book of Numbers begin and end?
2. What was the issue and conclusion concerning Zelophehad's daughters in Numbers 27?
3. What would happen to the land if these women married men from their own tribe?
4. What happened to the inherited property if the women married men from a different tribe?

**answers**

1. Numbers began in the Wilderness of Sinai in the second year of the Exodus. Numbers ends on the Plains of Moab across the Jordan River from Jericho, forty years after the Exodus from Egypt.
2. The five daughters of Zelophehad wanted their father's portion of land as an inheritance, since he had no sons. The Lord declared that this was right.
3. Even if the daughters were married and moved onto the land of their husbands' inheritance, they were still entitled to inherit their own father's land.
4. If the woman's land became the property of her husband from another tribe, tribal boundaries would become confused. Therefore, if a woman was in line to inherit family property she must marry within the tribe to keep the property.

**discuss/consider**

1. All five of Zelophehad's daughters desired to keep the family inheritance, so they submitted to God's law and married within the tribe. Their obedience and faith were shown in their actions. Do you really believe the promises of the Lord concerning your future inheritance? Would you obey the Lord's commands in specific areas of your life as these women did?
2. Review the book of Numbers. What is the most interesting thing you have learned from this study? What is the most valuable lesson you have learned?

**challenge**

Think back on your study of the book of Numbers. Praise God for His guidance and faithfulness to the children of Israel. Praise Him for His guidance and faithfulness to you!

**memorize**

*"Thus no inheritance shall change hands from one tribe to another, but every tribe of the children of Israel shall keep its own inheritance." Numbers 36:9*

*"These are the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded the children of Israel by the hand of Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho." Numbers 36:13*