

## Numbers

<b>Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pentateuch (Torah; Law of Moses) means “five scrolls” and refers to Genesis-Deuteronomy.</li> <li>• It’s meant to be read as narrative and contains two of them. The first is proto-history (Genesis 1-11); the second is the <u>beginning</u> of the salvation history of the Bible (Genesis 12-Deuteronomy 34)</li> <li>• In the first narrative, you have creation, fall and recreation where God gives us an inclination of how the salvation history of the Bible is going to unfold with the story of Noah (faith as righteousness). The second narrative begins with the redemption story through the line of Shem’s descendant Abraham.</li> <li>• The second narrative begins in Genesis 12 with Abraham going as God told him. Genesis ends with Jacob and his sons seeking refuge from a famine in Egypt. Exodus begins with Israel in bondage in Egypt. After they leave, God brings them to Sinai where they receive the law. They are encamped at Sinai from Exodus 19, the entirety of Leviticus, and the middle of Numbers.</li> </ul>
<b>Defining Numbers</b>	The title “Numbers” comes from the Greek Translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint (300 BC). In the Hebrew Bible, it’s known as <i>bedimar</i> (in the wilderness). We call it “Numbers” because chapters 1-4 contain a census list of all of the 12 tribes.
<b>Why Would a Census Be Necessary?</b>	The Book of Numbers is an important chapter in Israel’s story because it represents Israel being on the tale end of their encampment at Mt. Sinai. All that’s left to do is to pull up tent stakes, journey to the land God promised Abraham and take hold of that promise. As a result, the Book of Numbers features two census lists: a list of the first generation in the wilderness who are able to fight and a list of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation of abled body soldiers from each tribe, the “armies of the Lord”
<b>But Things Don’t Go as Expected</b>	The Book of Numbers is also a very dark book. Israel rebels against God and Moses and Moses rebels against the Lord’s instructions. Consequently, Israel wanders in the wilderness for a period of 40 years. 40 represents a generation. The exodus generation dies – as does Moses - and the next generation will take the Promised Land, of which Joshua and Caleb are a part. Before they can do that though, they need to be reminded of the same Law their parents received at Sinai. That’s what Deuteronomy (i.e., 2 <sup>nd</sup> Law) is about.
<b>Important Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reality of God’s presence against the backdrop of Israel’s doubt, unbelief, and grumbling that costs many lives and delays the entering of the Promised Land.</li> <li>• God’s discipline when His people choose to disobey.</li> <li>• Serves as both a warning and encouragement to trust God. His plans will prevail. But rebellion thwarts your role in it.</li> <li>• The writer of Hebrews uses Numbers to remind us of the value of learning from the errors of disobedience in the past to encourage obedience in the future.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Verses</b>	“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).
<b>Structure</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mobilization – Getting Ready to Possess the Land (Numbers 1-9)</li> <li>2. Displeasure – Grumbling, Complaining, Disobedience and Judgment (Numbers 10-20)</li> <li>3. Readyng a New Generation – Testing the New Generation to Enter the Land (Numbers 20-36)</li> </ol>

### Mobilization: Getting Ready to Possess the Land (Numbers 1-9)

#### ***1. Take a Census to Serve in the Army of the Lord***

The Lord spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the Desert of Sinaion the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. He said: <sup>2</sup>“Take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families, listing every man by name, one by one. <sup>3</sup>You and Aaron are to count according to their divisions all the men in Israel who are twenty years old or more and able to serve in the army. <sup>4</sup>One man from each tribe, each of them the head of his family, is to help you. (1:1-4)

#### ***2. But this Battle is Different, Your Generals Will Be:***

**Nazarites:** The Lord said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of dedication to the Lord as a Nazirite, <sup>3</sup>they must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink... <sup>5</sup>“During the entire period of their Nazirite vow, no razor may be used on their head. They must be holy until the period of their dedication to the Lord is over; they must let their hair grow long... <sup>6</sup>“Throughout the period of their dedication to the Lord, the Nazirite must not go near a dead body (6:1-3, 5-6)

**Priests:** <sup>22</sup>The Lord said to Moses, <sup>23</sup>“Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: <sup>24</sup>““The Lord bless you and keep you; <sup>25</sup>the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; <sup>26</sup>the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

<sup>27</sup>“So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.” (6:22-27)

## Displeasure: Grumbling, Complaining, Disobedience, and Judgment (Numbers 10-20)

1. ***We Are Bound for the Promised Land. So, What Could Go Wrong?***
  - a. <sup>11</sup> On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle of the covenant law. <sup>12</sup> Then the Israelites set out from the Desert of Sinai and traveled from place to place until the cloud came to rest in the Desert of Paran. <sup>13</sup> They set out, this first time, at the Lord's command through Moses. (10:11-13)
2. ***Manna from Heaven Isn't Enough. We Ate Better in Egypt***
  - a. <sup>4</sup> The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! <sup>5</sup> We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. <sup>6</sup> But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" (11:4-6)
3. ***God Speaks Through Us Too, Not Just Moses***
  - a. Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. <sup>2</sup> "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the Lord heard this. (12:1-2)
4. ***We Went to Spy on Canaan. Those Boys There are Big Ole Giants.***
  - a. <sup>31</sup> But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." <sup>32</sup> And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. (13:31-32)
5. ***We Had It So Much Better in Egyptian Bondage***
  - a. <sup>2</sup> All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! <sup>3</sup> Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" <sup>4</sup> And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt." (14:2-4)
6. ***Moses Didn't Do So Hot Either***
  - a. <sup>8</sup> "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. . . <sup>11</sup> Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. . . <sup>12</sup> But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them." (20:8, 11-12)

## Readying a New Generation — Testing the New Generation to Enter the Land (Numbers 20-36)

1. ***A New Priest***
  - a. <sup>27</sup> Moses did as the Lord commanded: They went up Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community. <sup>28</sup> Moses removed Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar. And Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain, <sup>29</sup> and when the whole community learned that Aaron had died, all the Israelites mourned for him thirty days. (20:27-29)
2. ***A New Foreshadowing***
  - a. <sup>8</sup> The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." <sup>9</sup> So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived. (21:8-9)
3. ***A New Kind of Prophet***
  - a. <sup>10</sup> Balaam said to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent me this message: <sup>11</sup> 'A people that has come out of Egypt covers the face of the land. Now come and put a curse on them for me. Perhaps then I will be able to fight them and drive them away.'" <sup>12</sup> But God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed." (22:10-12)
4. ***A New Census***
  - a. After the plague the Lord said to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, <sup>2</sup> "Take a census of the whole Israelite community by families—all those twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army of Israel." (26:1-2)
5. ***A New Leader***
  - a. <sup>14</sup> for when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, both of you disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes. . . <sup>18</sup> So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership,<sup>[a]</sup> and lay your hand on him. (27:14-18)
6. ***A New Celebration (And What It Foreshadows)***
  - a. When you are in the land, celebrate the following:
    - i. Our Fall: Feast of Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits; Pentecost
    - ii. Our Winter/Spring: Feast of Trumpets (New Year/Rosh-Hashanah); Day of Atonement; Feast of Tabernacles)