

# THE BOOK OF NUMBERS



WILDERNESS  
WALK

**sermon notes  
and study questions**

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# Introduction



Numbers begins with the great nation of Israel *in the wilderness*. The LORD has miraculously redeemed them from slavery in a foreign nation and will now lead them to the Promised Land.

He has provided all that is necessary for a holy nation to flourish and receive their promised blessing. The LORD's faithfulness is to be met with their obedience.

Obedience must be learned through discipline. What should have been an 11 day journey becomes 40 years in the wilderness!

A whole generation will die and fail to enter their rest.

*'These things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.'*

**1 Corinthians 10:6**

# **A great nation - Chs 1-4**



1. The Australian Constitution begins:-

'WHEREAS the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain ...'

a. What does this tell us about Australia?

b. What's missing?

c. Considering all the talk about the Constitution recently, does it matter?

2. Read Numbers 1:1-16. Israel had left Egypt and would form a new nation. What are the hints as to what type of a nation this will be?

a. Who will rule them? (1:1)

b. Why count the men able to serve in the army? (1:3) What expectation does this set up?

c. How is Israel structured? (1:4) What is promised to these people? How will that impact the character of the nation?

d. What is central to this nation? (1:1, 2:2).

3. Read Numbers 1:44-53. Numbers 1:46 the census records 603,550 fighting men over 20. How has Genesis 15:15 been fulfilled?

4. Why 'tents'? (Exodus 13:21) What does this indicate about this community?

5. What is the greatest threat to this community? (1:53)

6. Read Numbers 3:5-10. What was the role of the Levites?

7. What does this reveal about the LORD's character?

8. Read Hebrews 9:8-11. How does Hebrews describe the function of the tabernacle? How is Christ the fulfilment of the tabernacle's function?

9. At this stage of Numbers, what does Israel have going for it?

10. Read Matt 28:18-20. In what ways is the great commission foundational to the New Covenant?

# Cleanliness is godliness - Ch 5



1. When a driver accidentally scratches another person's car, should they leave a note under the wiper? Should they, or their insurance company, pay? Why?

2. Read Numbers 5:1-4. When you had an infection, like the Coronavirus, and had to be isolated, how did it feel?

3. What does this reveal about purity?

4. Read Mark 5:35-42. What is shocking about Jesus' action? What does this say about the healing Jesus brings?

5. Read Numbers 5:5-10. Why confess? Why make restitution? How does this provide for restitution without an overly harsh penalty?

6. How does Jesus pay our restitution? Hebrews 9:13-14

7. Read Numbers 5:11-31. How did you feel reading this? How does it rate in terms of fairness?

8. In what ways does it protect a woman from false accusation? Whose honour is at stake?

9. If 5:1-4 refers to purification of disease, 5:5-10 purification of guilt, what purification does 5:11-31 provide for? How are the three sections related?

10. Can we hide sin? What is the role of confession? James 5:16.

# **Something to complain about - Ch 11**





1. Where do you draw the line between an acceptable and unacceptable complaint?

2. Read Numbers 11:1-3. What did the people complain about? Do they have a point?

3. How did God view their complaint?

4. Read Numbers 11:4-9. What did the rabble complain about? Do they have a point?

5. Where was their focus? Where had it shifted from? (Numbers 10:29)

6. How does the description of manna (v7-9) refute the people's complaint?

7. Read Numbers 11:10-15. What was Moses reacting against?

8. When it comes to grumbling, how do the Israelites serve as warnings for us?

9. Read John 6:35-51. How is Jesus superior to manna?

10. What is the right response to "the bread of life"?

11. How can we encourage one another when we struggle with contentment?

# Can't! - Ch 13



1. What is likely to make you doubt God's promises?

2. Read Numbers 13:1-2. What is promised?

3. Read Numbers 13:3-25. What would be the purpose of such a report? What impact could it have on the community?

4. Read Numbers 13:26-33. In what ways does the report confirm the LORD's promise?

5. What made them doubt the promise?

6. Read Hebrews 4:1-13. According to this, what did the spies lack?

7. What were the consequences?

8. How should have the events of Numbers prepared them and produced faith?

9. What do we have to ensure we remember the promises and power of the LORD?  
(2 Corinthians 1:20-22)

10. Pray for the things that rock your faith.

# **Better off dead - Ch 14**



1. What were some reasons why we rebelled against our parents?

2. Summarise the spy's report in Numbers 13:25-33.

3. Read Numbers 14:1-4. What did the people's complaint say about their understanding of God's character and motive in bringing the people to Canaan?

4. Why did the people rebel?

5. Read Numbers 14:5-9. How did Joshua and Caleb see the situation differently? What reasons did Joshua and Caleb give to stay the course?

6. Read Numbers 14:10-12. What makes their rebellion inexcusable?

7. How serious is their rebellion in God's eyes? (Also Numbers 14:13-38)

8. In what way is Jesus a superior leader to Moses? (Hebrews 3:1-6)

9. Who are alternative leaders to Jesus that we might be tempted to follow away from the rest to come? (Numbers 14:4)

10. In light of Christ, how can we respond like Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:6-9) when we are pulled towards rebellion and unbelief? (Hebrews 3:7-4:1)

# **Cursing the blessed - Ch 22-24**



**NOTE: It would be helpful preparation to read the entire section, Numbers 22-24, before meeting.**

1. What does it mean to be 'blessed'?

2. Read Numbers 22:1-12. Where are the Israelites?

3. Why were the Moabites filled with dread?

4. How would you describe the king's attempt to quell the threat?

5. Why will any attempt to 'curse' Israel be ineffective?

6. What has Israel got going for them?

7. What will become of anyone who curses the LORD's people? (Genesis 12:3)

8. Read Ephesians 1:3-10. Describe this blessing.

9. What threatens it?

10. List the opponents to faith eg. doubt, persecution ...

11. 18 century philosopher, Voltaire wrote, "(The Bible) is what fools have written, what imbeciles commend, what rogues teach and young children are made to learn by heart." Discuss.

# Zeal for the LORD - Ch 25





1. What is zeal?

6. Why was he commended?

2. Read Numbers 25:1-5. What was at stake? Why was this a serious offense?

7. How was he like Christ? Back up your answers with Scripture.

3. Who was behind this seduction? (Numbers 31:16)

8. How does Jesus call us to be 'zealous for the LORD's honour'? (Romans 12:9-13)

4. Read Numbers 25:6-13. How do you react to this violent depiction of Phinehas?

9. What area of life could you practice more zeal?

5. What was his motivation?

# Revenge! - Ch 31



1. When is war 'just'?

2. Read Numbers 31:1-18. Was this war just? Why/why not?

3. What was the significance of the 12,000 strong army?

4. What was the reason for this attack?

5. How do you explain the zero casualties? (31:49)

6. Why was Balaam considered wicked?  
(2 Peter 2:13-16)

7. How do the LORD's promises to Abraham reverberate through the book of Numbers? (Genesis 12:3)

8. How has Christ fought our battle? Why will his followers never be asked to take up arms in the name of the LORD? (Colossians 2:15)

9. Read Romans 12:17-21. Why is revenge necessary? What is the cost of peace?



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