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# Numbers

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## Author

Moses ([Num 36:13](#))

## Date and Timeframe

Date: 1406BC, [1Kings 6:1](#)

Timeframe: 38 years, 10 months ([Num 1:1](#), [Deu 1:3](#))

## Subject

Numbers records why Israel wandered 40 years in the wilderness instead of traveling 11 days ([Deu 1:2](#)). The generation that was miraculously delivered from Egypt the previous year did not believe God was able to defeat their new enemies. Therefore that generation could not enter the Promised Land ([Num 13-14](#)).

Numbers derives its title from two censuses (“numberings”) at the start and end of the 40 years.

## Key Chapter and Verses

[Num 13-14](#), doubt and disobey

[Num 13:31](#), we are not able...they are stronger

## Lesson

Numbers teaches us the importance of believing God’s promises ourselves to enter our “Promised Land,” the state of resting in God and His promises ([Heb 3-4](#), [Heb 3:16-19](#)).

## High-Level Outline

1-14 old generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• numbering 1-4</li><li>• instructing 5-9</li><li>• journeying 10-14</li></ul>	Sinai to Kadesh- barnea
15-20 transition	wandering 15-20	wilderness wandering
21-36 new generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• journeying 21-25</li><li>• numbering 26-27</li><li>• instructing 28-36</li></ul>	Kadesh to plain of Moab

## The Brazen Serpent

sin <a href="#">21:5</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• murmured about the way + manna</li><li>• murmured against God + against Moses</li></ul>
suffering <a href="#">21:6</a>	punishment = pain + death
supplication <a href="#">21:7</a>	confession (we have sinned) + entreaty (pray)
salvation <a href="#">21:8-9</a>	in the serpent + by a look

[Numbers 21](#) contains a rich prophetic picture of what Jesus would do at the cross. If anyone believes and looks to Christ, they accept His gift of salvation by faith ([John 3:14-16](#), [Rom 6:23](#)).

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## Personal Reflection and Application

- When God presents you with a direction that seems overwhelming, what do you see?
  - opportunities (**Num 13:1-25**)
  - obstacles (**Num 13:26-33**)How big is your God? To what degree do you know and trust His promises?
- You may have heard the expression, “fight the good fight” (**1Tim 6:12**). As Numbers portrays, Christian life is a battle ground. You can’t remain neutral (**Mat 12:30**). If Christ is your Savior, how is this relevant to you? Read **2Timothy 2:3-4**.
- Complaining is the non-constructive airing of grievances. Grumbling and murmuring make God angry (**Num 11:1, 1Cor 10:10**). When you are displeased about something, what tends to be your first response?
  - keep it to myself, avoid any kind of conflict
  - grumble to those around me
  - complain to leaders
  - take my thoughts and feelings to God (**Psa 142:1-2**)
  - work in a positive way to resolve the issues (**Mat 18**)What changes might you make to please God in the way you handle grievances?

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## Small Group Conversation Guide

- Notice in **Numbers 1** how they got organized for their mission, their outer world. In what ways do you cooperate with God to bring order to your life?
  - ▶ What can you do to be sure you are listening to God (**Rom 8:14, Mark 1:35**)?
  - ▶ What can you do to continue your spiritual growth (**1John 2:4**)?
  - ▶ How can you strengthen yourself with godly companionship (**Ecc 4:12**)?
  - ▶ In what ways can you cooperate with leaders (**Heb 13:17**)?
  - ▶ In what ways can you cooperate with God’s attempts to bring order to your life (**Pro 3:5-6, 1Cor 14:40**)?
- One serious struggle many of us face is anger. There are times when it is okay to be angry (**Eph 4:26**); however it is wrong to let anger control us. In **Numbers 20:1-13**, Moses’ anger caused him to disobey what God told him to do. Discuss practical things we can do when we begin to feel our anger rise.
- God does supply all our needs (**Num 21:16**). Every good thing comes from Him (**Php 4:19**). God enjoys hearing our song of thanks and praise to Him (**Col 3:16**). As a group, either sing some songs of praise or make a list of things for which you truly thank God.

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# Leadership Principles from Numbers

## Complainers

As a leader (parent, group leader, person to whom others listen), there will be times when people complain to you or about you ([Mark 3:20-21](#)). Think of times when you've had to endure complaining. Notice what Moses does for the complainers in [Numbers 11:2](#). What could you do to remember to respond as Moses did?

## Responding to Criticism

One of the most difficult things to handle as a leader is when those closest to you complain to you. God takes complaints about leaders seriously because no one becomes a leader without His permission ([1Sam 8:7](#)). It is not easy; however, we should expect criticism ([Ecc 7:21-22](#)) and handle it as God desires. Read [Romans 8:33-34](#) and [Matthew 5:44](#). What do these passages suggest we do to handle criticism against us.

## Eyes on Jesus

Your goal as a leader is to lead others to Jesus. This is easier if you keep your own eyes on Him ([John 3:14-16](#)). When you take your eyes off Christ, you become an easier target for Satan's temptations and torments ([Num 21:8](#)). Think of ways to remind yourself when your eyes wander that you need to return your focus to Our Savior.

## Something to Find in Each Chapter

As you read through the book, it may help to have something to find in each group of chapters.  
Try these:

01. Why God told Israel to number all the men	02. What was located in the exact center of the camp
03. Why God gave the Levites to the high priest	04. How the Levites transported the Tabernacle
05. How important it was to God to keep the camp pure	06. How people could separate themselves for God
07. How Israel's leaders modeled generosity	08. How people can be a gift from God
09. How Israel sought advice and direction from God	10. How important clear communication is to God
11. How complaining to others and God are different	12. What role jealousy played in the complaint regarding Moses
13. How the spies interpreted the same facts differently	14. What doubting God and His promises cost Israel
15. What Israel was to remember with the tassels	16. Who Israel blamed for the death of the rebels
17. What role fruitfulness played in revealing God's will	18. What the Levites inherited in lieu of their own land
19. How an innocent being died to purify Israel from sin	20. How a single moment of anger cost Moses the land
21. How the serpent lifted up pictured Christ (John 3:14)	22. How Balaam disobeyed by leaving before being called
23. How God turned a curse into a blessing (Deu 23:5)	24. What reason Balaam gave for not cursing Israel
25. What God promised Phinehas for protecting Israel	26. How the census impacted what the tribes inherited
27. How Joshua was selected as Moses' replacement	28. How often Israel sacrificed to God
29. How sacrifices were to be unblemished (Rom 12:1)	30. How seriously God wanted Israel to treat their vows
31. How God valued both soldiers and their supporters	32. What concerned Moses about the tribal request
33. Why Israel was to drive all enemies from the land	34. How specific God was in His plans for Israel
35. How people were freed by the high priest's death	36. Where Israel was camped at the end of the book