

Numbers

By James West

Outline of the book:

Main thought: Obtain God's intended blessings through faith. Unbelief and rebellion will forfeit them.

1. Introduction

- a. Imaginary scenario based on the journeyings of the camp
- b. The book covers approximately 38-39 years, from the end of the Sinai encampment to the threshold of entering the promised land.
- c. Mostly written by Moses around 1406, maybe just before he died.
- d. Trace the wanderings of Israel on a map.

2. Obtain God's intended blessings through faith.

- a. Shining examples: Joshua, Caleb, Phinehas (went with the new generation)
- b. Take inventory of your resources (Numbered the men of war: ch. 1 & 26)
- c. Take up your position among God's people (ch. 2)
- d. Survey the promises
 - i. The Aaronic benediction (**6:22-27**)
 - ii. The borders of the land described to them (ch. 34)
- e. Follow God's leadership; looking unto Jesus (Following the cloud: **9:15-23**; Hebrews 12:1, 2)

3. Unbelief and rebellion will forfeit them.

- a. Examples from Numbers (Go through these quickly!)
 - i. Complainers burned with fire (11:1-3)
 - ii. The plague upon those that lusted after meat (11:33)
 - iii. Miriam and Aaron corrected for their jealousy (ch. 12)
 - iv. 12 spies bring an evil report (ch. 13)
 - v. Israel turns back in their hearts, and is barred from entering the land (14)
 - vi. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram judged for despising the God-appointed authority. 250 men burned. Others complain, and are plagued. (ch. 16)
 - vii. Aaron's rod made to bud (ch. 17)
 - viii. Miriam dies; Moses barred from promised land for striking rock; Aaron dies, and is succeeded by son Eleazar (ch. 20)
 - ix. Israel complains, and God sends fiery serpents (21)

- x. Israel commits whoredom with Moab, after Balaak tries to hire Balaam to curse Israel, and the Israelites are plagued (ch. 25)
 - b. Related passages: **1 Cor 10:1-14; Hebrews 3:7-19**
- 4. **Christ, the Saviour and the Giver of life**
 - a. The serpent on a pole **(21:4-9)**
 - b. The well of water **(21:16-18)**
- 5. **Conclusion:**
 - Are you moving forward in faith, doing what God has shown you to do, and whole-heartedly pursuing your calling, or are you wallowing in unbelief, worldly lusts, rebellion toward authority, and complaining?
 - Don't think that any one of us is exempt from falling prey to unbelief or a bad attitude.
 - Are you turning back in your heart?
 - Are you bringing a discouraging report, or are you allowing yourself to become discouraged?
 - Our decisions affect those around us, and not the least our children.
 - There is an incredible spiritual battle raging over your life, as demonstrated by the powers of darkness seeking to work through Balaam. Don't be among the number that falls prey to unbelief and rebellion.
 - Are you going to capitulate to the lusts of this world, or are you going to be valiant and zealous for truth, as was Phinehas?
 - Moses, like the law, is unable to bring a person to God. Joshua, like Jesus, leads the believer into the rest that God has provided.

Summary of chapters:

1. The numbering of the men of war
2. The camping position of all the tribes of Israel, relative to the tabernacle of the congregation
3. The families of the Levites described, and their responsibilities in relation to the tabernacle
4. "
5. Laws concerning adultery
6. Nazarites, and the Aaronic benediction
7. Offerings from the 12 tribes, for the dedication of the altar
8. Purification of the Levites for the service of the tabernacle
9. Passover regulations; following the pillar of cloud
10. Regulations for trumpet blowing; **At the end of first year:** departure from Sinai of 3 days' journey; Hobab comes to be a guide

11. Israel complains, God sends fire. God gives quail, and then smites them. Seventy elders chosen to rule with Moses.
12. Miriam struck with leprosy for attacking Moses' leadership position
13. 12 spies search Canaan, and bring back report **to Kadesh, Israel having now journeyed from Sinai (Deut 1:2)**
14. Israel turns back in their hearts; Moses intercedes for them; God promises they shall not enter; Certain attempt to enter by force
15. Offerings required of Israel; stoning of Sabbath-breaker; Fringes on garments
16. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram destroyed in their rebellion; Aaron makes an atonement to stop the ensuing plague
17. Aaron's rod buds
18. Tithes and offerings
19. Purification with the ashes of an heifer
20. **Possibly the move to Kadesh (20:1) happens before the events of chapters 14 to 19, and it is also possible that the children of Israel spend a lot of time (38 years? There is scholarly disagreement over this) encamping in various parts of the wilderness of Kadesh. Possibly projecting the narrative forward, then, some 38 years, Miriam dies in this same region (Kadesh);** Moses is barred from promised land for striking rock; Edom refuses passage; Aaron dies, and is succeeded by son Eleazar
21. Israel's revenge on Canaan; the serpent of brass; a well is dug; Sihon and Og defeated
22. Balaak unsuccessfully hires Balaam to curse Israel
23. "
24. "
25. Israel commits whoredom with Moab, and 20,000 are slain; Phinehas excutes judgment and is blessed
26. Second numbering of the men of war in Israel
27. The daughters of Zelophehad get their inheritance; Moses told to pass leadership to Joshua
28. Various offerings, and the feast of unleavened bread
29. Other feasts
30. Concerning vows
31. Israel fights with Midian; Moses angry because of Midianite women; Prey and spoil divided, and some consecrated to the tabernacle
32. Gad and Reuben request certain land for their cattle
33. Journeys of Israel from Egypt to the plains of Moab
34. Borders of land of Israel described
35. Cities for the Levites, and cities of refuge
36. Laws concerning the marriage of heiresses



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