



A study by David A. DeWitt

Introduction

The Name Comes From the Septuagint

The Book of Numbers takes its English name from the Greek translation in the Septuagint Ἀριθμοί, (Arithmoi) “Numbers,” clearly because the book is full of statistics such as tribal population figures and the number of priests and Levites. The Hebrew title בְּמִדְבָּר (bi-midbar) is the fifth word in the book, and means “in the desert (or wilderness).” The Hebrew title should be accepted because the book describes the time the young nation of Israel spent in the desert from a year after the exodus until they were camped in the Plains Of Moab about to enter the Land, a little over 40 years later (Joshua 5:6). The book describes the greatest mass migration of people in all of history.



Moses Was The Author

Although some interpretive work was done in putting the Old Testament together (probably by Ezra – see Nehemiah 8:1-8) there should be no doubt about Moses being the author. The authorship and setting are best described in 33:1-2

*These are the journeys of the sons of Israel, by which they came out from the land of Egypt by their armies, under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. **Moses recorded their starting places according to their journeys by the command of the LORD**, and these are their journeys according to their starting places. [Emphasis throughout this material are mine.]*

Jesus often referred to the Old Testament as *Moses and the prophets*. This assumes Moses was the author of the whole Pentateuch, which includes Numbers (Luke 16:29,31; 24:27,44).

Eugene H. Merrill summarizes the criticism of a Mosaic authorship very well.

“Without the subjective and circular arguments employed by most source critics and redaction critics it is unlikely that any view of authorship other than Mosaic would ever have occurred to most readers (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Numbers, Introduction).”

“Numbers” Follows The Movement of the Nation, From Sinai to The Plains Of Moab

The book of Numbers begins with the Israelites gathered at Mount Sinai one year after they fled from Egypt. It continues the historical narrative of the Pentateuch, beginning one month after the close of the last chapter of Exodus (Exodus 40:2; Numbers 1:1).

- I. Preparations for travel at Mount Sinai (1:1-10:10)
- II. From Sinai to Kadesh-barnea (10:11-12:16)
- III. At Kadesh-barnea (13:1-20:22)
- IV. From Kadesh-barnea through the wilderness to the plains of Moab (20:22- 21:35)
- V. In the Plains of Moab (22:1-36:13)

The Book Covers a Period of 40 Years, From 1445 to 1406

Israel's exodus from Egypt was in the year 1446 BC. The date of the exodus is based on 1Kings 6:1

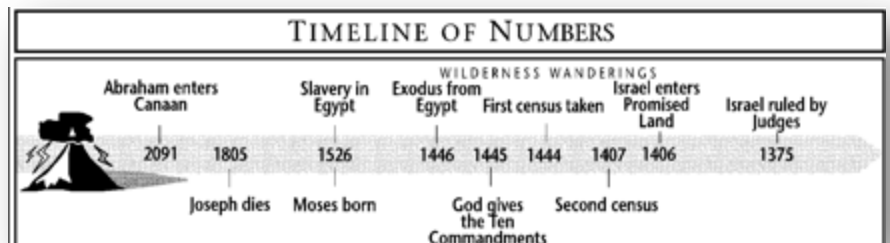
Now it came about in the four hundred and eightieth year after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

We know from the Bible and several ancient sources that Solomon began construction of the temple in 966 BC, which was 480 years after the Exodus, making the exodus in 1446 BC. One year after the Exodus, in 1445, Israel gathered at Mount Sinai to receive the Law. Exodus 40:2 reads,

On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.

Then, one month later we have the beginning of the book of Numbers.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt (Numbers 1:1).



So the book of Numbers was written by Moses, between 1445 and his death in 1406. [The timeline is from the Ryrie Study Bible.]

The Purpose Was To Record Israel's Failures As A Warning

The apostle Paul gave us the purpose of Numbers. He wrote:

Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall (1 Corinthians 10:6-12).

The purpose for the writing of Numbers was *instruction* for future generations to learn from the sins of the Israelites, after they were given the Law and before they occupied the land.

The Theme is, God Keep His Promises And His Purposes, Even When His People Fail

The book of Numbers records numerous failures and a few successes of the people of God. There is the seemingly continual unbelief and discontent of the Israelites. There is the failure of Aaron and Miriam, and even Moses. There is a record of the people refusing to go in to the land at Kadesh-barnea. There is the rebellion of Korah. There is the idolatrous worship and the taking of foreign wives.

Yet through those 40 years God kept His covenant with their forefathers and brought their descendants in to the land. God dealt with Israelites individually. But he also dealt with the nation collectively. But we can apply both individually. The lesson is, like the sin of Israel our sin causes God grief and brings about disastrous conditions in our lives, but God keep His promises anyway.

Questions

1. The title “Numbers” comes from:
 - A. Hebrew
 - B. Greek
 - C. English

2. The book of “Numbers” was written in
 - A. Hebrew
 - B. Greek
 - C. English

3. The title “In the wilderness” is:
 - A. Hebrew
 - B. Greek
 - C. English

4. The Book of Numbers cover about:
 - A. One year
 - B. One year and one month
 - C. 40 years

5. How long after the exodus from Egypt did Moses start writing Numbers?
 - A. One year
 - B. One year and one month
 - C. 40 years

6. Moses began writing Numbers in the year,
 - A. 1445
 - B. 1446
 - C. 1406

7. The year of the exodus from Egypt was,
 - A. 1445
 - B. 1446
 - C. 1406

8. Moses completed the book of Numbers in the year,
 - A. 1445
 - B. 1446
 - C. 1406

9. The purpose of the book of Numbers was to provide future generations with,
 - A. A record the numbers of the people who came out of Egypt
 - B. Examples of the disobedience of the Israelites that came out of Egypt
 - C. Instruction about sin and it’s consequences.

10. True or False? The theme of the book of Numbers is that God keeps His promises even when His people are unfaithful.

Answers: 1. B; 2. A; 3. A; 4. C; 5. B. 6. A; 7. B; 8. C; 9. C; 10. True.

Chapter 1 Numbering the Warriors

Verses 1-16. Read 1:1-3. Numbering the men over 20 “able to go out to war”

Verse 1 was discussed in the Introduction.

Verse 2 gives the command to, *Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families.* The reason for the census is not given. Two common suggestions are:

1. To show God’s faithfulness in that He increased the seed of Jacob, and
2. To register the ability of Israel to go to war.

Verse 3 says, *from twenty years old and upward, whoever is able to go out to war.* The phrase *able to go out to war* occurs 14 times in the book. What is interesting is that it was sinful when David did this (2 Samuel 24). Also the men *able to go out to war* in this census refused to go to war at Kedish-barnea and therefore died off over the next 39 years *in the wilderness.* And that’s the Hebrew title of the book, *in the wilderness.* So the first chapter tells us God provided the manpower for them to take the land but their disobedience resulted in that manpower needlessly dyeing off *in the wilderness.*

Verses 17-46. Read 1:17-19 and 46. The totals are recorded

There is much discussion about the total of 603,550 men over 20 years old. Many feel this is too large of a number to negotiate the wilderness journey. Some suggest that the word for “thousand” should be understood as family or clan, giving a much smaller number. Others suggest this word should be understood as chief” or “commander.”

Then, for example in Reuben’s case the number would be 46 commanders plus 500 men. But none of these have any agreement with the biblical numbers. The total of 603,550 agrees with the figure given in Exodus 38:26 and approximate number of 600,000 men in Exodus 12:37. With women and children the total must have reached several (possibly two and one half) million. It seems best to take the biblical figures literally since there is no textual reason to allegorize them.

Reuben	46,500	(v. 21)
Simeon	59,300	(v. 23)
Gad	45,650	(v. 25)
Judah	74,600	(v. 27)
Issachar	54,400	(v. 29)
Zebulun	57,400	(v. 31)
Ephraim	40,500	(v. 33)
Manasseh	32,200	(v. 35)
Benjamin	35,400	(v. 37)
Dan	62,700	(v. 39)
Asher	41,500	(v. 41)
Naphtali	53,400	(v. 43)
Total	603,550	(v. 46)

Read Verses 47-54. The Levites are in charge of the Tabernacle

The Levites were: 1. Not counted in the 603,550, 2. Not required, or allowed to go out to war, 3. Were in charge of the *tabernacle and all its furnishing*, 4. Must take down, carry, and set up the tabernacle.

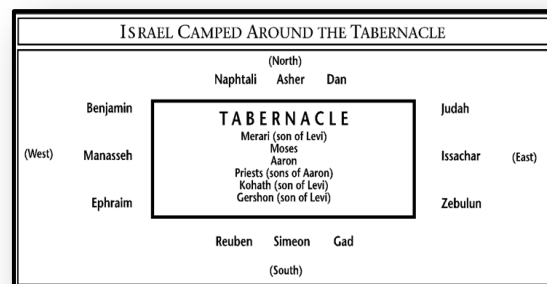
A Lesson from Chapter 1: God provides what we need, but we need to believe in what God provides.

Chapter 2 The Order

Read verses 1-2 & 33-34. The nation was given a set encampment and marching order. There were four groups of three tribes each, one group on each side of the tabernacle. The tribe of Levi was placed immediately around the tabernacle.

Banners or flags identified the individual families, and a *standard* (17-18) identified each three-tribe division.

A Lesson from Chapter 2: Godly things must be done decently and in order.



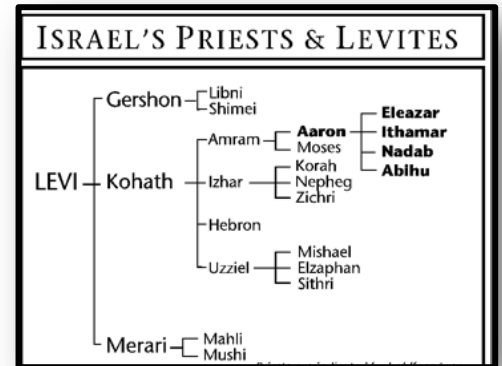
Chapter 3 Levites And The Firstborn

Read verses 11-16 & 44- 51. The Levites replace the firstborn.

The point of the chapter is in verse 13, *For all the firstborn are Mine [as commanded in Exodus 13:2] on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel.*

The addition of one Hebrew letter would change 8,600 to 8,300 in verse 28 and bring the figures in verses 22, 28, and 34 into agreement with the total in verse 39. [7,500 +8,300 + 6,200 = 22,000 Levites.] But there were 22,273 firstborn (v. 43). The difference was to be compensated for by paying *five shekels* for each of the 273 firstborn not matched by a Levite. The comparatively small number of *firstborn males* (22,273) may be because it only includes those born since the Exodus (Exodus 13:1-2).

A Lesson from Chapter 3: The first part, of whatever we have, belongs to God.



Chapter 4 The Service of the Levites

Read verses 1-4 & 15-20. The Levites move the utensils of the tabernacle.

The age of priestly service was between 30 and 50. However, the Levites could serve in other capacities, or as apprentices, at younger ages (Numbers 4:23, 30, 35; 8:24; 1 Chronicles 23:3, 24, 27; Ezra 3:8). According to verse 48 only 8,580 of the 22,000 Levites (3:39) were eligible for service in the Tabernacle. Aaron and his sons could see and touch the *most holy things* but no one else. After Aaron and his sons packed them, the Kohathites could move them but not look at them (v. 20) or they would die.

A Lesson from Chapter 4: God is completely holy and cannot be approached by sinful men.

Chapter 5 Purity in the Camp

Read verses 1-4. The unclean are put out of the camp.

Israel's holiness included physical bodily holiness. Anything that offended the holiness of God was to be removed. This included leprosy (probably any infectious skin disease) a bodily discharge of any kind (like menstrual or seminal emissions), and the contamination resulting from contact with a dead body.

Read verses 4-8. Those who sin against others must repay them plus 20%.

Next we have the principle of recompense. The offender who wrongs another person has also sinned against God. They must confess that sin and also make full restitution for it plus 20 percent. If the offended party was no longer alive and had no immediate relative, the payment was to be given to God, along with a ram, which was required as a guilt offering of atonement (Leviticus 5:15; 6:6; 7:1-10). The offering was given to the priest for him to eat (Leviticus 7:6-7).

Read verses 11-17 & 27-31. The law for the spirit of jealousy.

Adultery violated a commandment of God and required the death penalty. But what if a husband suspected adultery, but could not prove it. This ceremony, where God miraculously passed judgment, through the woman drinking specially prepared water, was only performed in the wilderness. What actually happened to the guilty woman is unclear. She may have died, miscarried, or become sterile.

A Lesson from Chapter 5: Sin against other people is sin against God

Chapter 6 The Nazirite Vow

Read verses 1-12. The Nazirite vow presented.

The vow had three basic parts: (1) Do not eat or drink anything made from grapes or any alcoholic drink, (2) Do not cut your hair, and (3) Do not touch a dead body. The Hebrew word נָזִיר (nazir) means *one consecrated* or *devoted*. The reason for these particular restrictions is unknown but the purpose seems to be to give the individual Israelite an opportunity to set a time of special dedication to God. It is also interesting to note that drinking wine and strong drink were apparently common and not condemned for Israelites in general. Examples of biblical Nazirites were Samson (Judges 13), Samuel (1 Samuel 1:9-11), John the Baptist (Luke 1:15, 80), and Paul (Acts 18:18).

Verses 9-12 describe the sacrifices to be offered when a Nazirite inadvertently touched a dead body.

Read Verses 13-21. How to terminate a Nazirite vow

The Nazirite had to offer a peace, grain, drink, sin, and burnt offerings, then shave and burn his hair.

Read Verses 22-27. The blessing Aaron was to give to Israel, a common benediction

The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.'

A Lesson from Chapter 6 God encourages special individual dedication.

Chapter 7 Gifts for the Levites

Read verses 1-9. Gifts to help the Levites move the tabernacle

Before they left Sinai the tribal leaders brought gifts to be used by the Levites in moving the tabernacle. They brought six wagons (one from every two of them) and 12 oxen (one each). But Moses did not distribute them equally. He gave twice as much to the Merarites as to the Gershonites because the Merarites had to carry the heavy wooden and metal pieces of the tabernacle. And Moses gave none to the Koathites because their assignment was to carry the sacred objects on their shoulders, not on a cart. David experienced the penalty of disobeying that command when he attempted to move the ark of the covenant on a cart (2 Samuel 6).



Read verses 10-17. The Individual gifts from each of the tribal leaders

The leaders offered the dedication offering for the altar when it was anointed. So for 12 days the tribal leaders brought generous gifts to God. The listing of all these seems to indicate God's approval, as does the last verse of the chapter. Verses 84-88 give the totals of the gifts, then verse 89 says, Now when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, so He spoke to him.

A Lesson from Chapter 7 God notices generous givers

Chapter 8 Cleansing the Levites

Read verse 1-4 Lighting the Lamps

The construction of the lamps was ordered in Exodus 25:31-40. Here they are lit and their light is directed downward so that they will light the area in front of them.

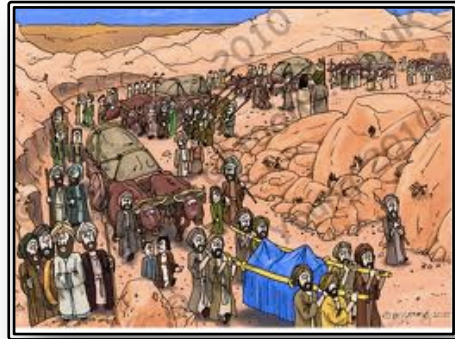
Read verses 6 & 14-16 & 23-26. The procedure for cleansing and presenting the Levites

Cleansing the Levites included five steps. 1. Sprinkling with water (probably with ashes of the red heifer). 2. Cutting their hair (not the Hebrew word for shaved). 3. Bringing a young bull and giving a burnt, grain and sin offering. 4. The people laying hands on them. 5. Aaron offering them to God.

A Lesson from Chapter 8 Don't try to serve God if you are living in sin.

Questions

- The reason for taking a census of the people was,
 - To show God's faithfulness in thus increasing the seed of Jacob
 - To register the ability of Israel to go to war
 - No reason is given
- The number of men over 20 able to go to war was approximately
 - 60,000
 - 600,000
 - 2 ½ Million
- The number of Levites was,
 - 7,500
 - 22,000
 - 22,273
- The number of firstborn was,
 - 7,500
 - 22,000
 - 22,273
- The Levites could serve in the tabernacle, performing all the duties of the priests from ages,
 - 20-50
 - 30-50
 - 20-60
- When they moved the tabernacle, they had to wrap the *most holy things*.
 - Aaron and his sons could see and touch them but no one else.
 - The Kohathites could look at them but not touch them.
 - The Gershonites could carry them but not look at them or touch them.
- Lepers had to live outside the camp because,
 - They might infect others
 - Leprosy was a word for many different diseases
 - Leprosy offended the holiness of God
- Before they left Sinai the tribal leaders brought gifts to be used by the Levites in moving the tabernacle.
 - They brought six wagons (one from every two of them) and 12 oxen.
 - They brought 12 wagons (one from each of them) and six oxen.
 - They brought 12 wagon and 12 oxen (one each from each of them).
- Moses distributed their gifts
 - Equally
 - Equally except gave none to the Kohathites because they were to carry the sacred objects on their shoulders, not on a cart.
 - Unequally
- When the Levites were cleansed the ceremony included all but which one of these.
 - A peace offering
 - Sprinkling with water
 - Cutting their hair



Answers: 1. C; 2. B; 3. B; 4. C. 5. B; 6. A; 7. C; 8. A; 9. C; 10. A (They offered a burnt, grain and sin offering).

Chapter 9 Keeping the Passover and Moving the Tabernacle

Read verses 1-12. Keeping the Passover

The instructions of 9:1-14 were given *in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt*. So these instructions were given after the completion of the tabernacle in Exodus 40:17 but before the instructions about the census given in Numbers Chapter 1. It was also probably given before the 14th of Nisan since that was the day of Passover. Here Moses asks God about people who were unclean because they touched a dead body. God said they, and those on a journey, could celebrate Passover but in the second month instead of the first month. Everyone else must observe it on the 14th of the first month or he will be *cut off from his people, for he did not present the offering of the LORD at its appointed time. That man will bear his sin.*

Read verses 15-17. Moving the Tabernacle

The presence of the Lord was represented with a cloud (Exodus 13:21-22 and 40:34-38) and when it moved they had to move if they were going to continue to be in His presence. *Sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning. Sometimes it was two days or a month or a year (21-22).*

A Lesson from Chapter 9 Observe the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Jesus

Chapter 10 Leaving Sinai

Read verses 1- 10. The trumpets call

“According to representations on Jewish coins and on the Arch of Titus in Rome, these were long, straight tubes, flared at the end” (Ryrie Study Bible). Two trumpets were blown in various ways to gather the people to the Tabernacle, to alert them to break camp, or to go to war. *For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle (1Corinthians 14:8 KJV)?*



II. From Sinai to Kadesh-barnea (10:11-12:16)

Read verses 11-13. Moving out

Now in the second year [after the Exodus], in the second month [after 11 months at Sinai], on the twentieth of the month [the 20th day after the beginning of the instruction in 1:1], the cloud was lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony. So the Israelites left and followed the cloud until it *settled down in the wilderness of Paran.*

Read verses 29-36. Asking for help

Moses convinced his brother-in-law, *Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite*, to travel with them. Moses told him it was because *you know where we should camp in the wilderness, and you will be as eyes for us.* Moses in-laws, the Kenites, also settled in Canaan (Judges 1:16; 4:11).

A Lesson from Chapter 10 Divine guidance does not exclude using human help (Ryrie).

Chapter 11 Complaining at Kibroth-hattaavah

Read verses 1-3. Fire in the outskirts of the camp.

After only three days of travel (10:33-36) the people began to complain. We do not know who complained (possibly the rabble of verse 4) or what they complained about, but *when the LORD heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts [literally the end] of the camp [the Hebrew word for camp seems to include people not just tents].* The name *Taberah* means “burning,” but it was only a temporary name for Kibroth-hattaavah (see verse 35).

Read verses 4-9. Complaining about manna

The NASV says, *The rabble who were among them had greedy desires.* The word *greedy* is not in the text. The point is they desired meat and vegetables like they ate in Egypt. Exodus 16:31 says *manna was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.* Here Moses says they would also *grind it between two millstones or beat it in the mortar, and boil it in the pot and make cakes with it; and its taste was as the taste of cakes baked with oil.* Manna was apparently like potatoes in the Midwest, rice in the orient, and bread in Jesus' day. It was sustaining, nutritious, not bad tasting, but bland and boring. It came when the dew fell on the camp at night.



Read verses 10-15. Moses did not want the burden of all this people.

Next Moses complains. Moses sees his leadership as (1) a burden, even a punishment, from God, (2) God's idea, not something Moses purposed to do, and (3) something Moses would be glad to give over to someone else. That's the way we should see ministry.

Read verses 16-30. Moses gets help

Instead of granting Moses' request for death God said, *Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting.* Moses does so, but questions God as to how He will supply meat for 600,000 (plus woman and children). But *the LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD'S power limited? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not."* So Moses' faith was to be based on real verifiable evidence. The 70 *prophesied* [only once] *they did not do it again.* We do not know what they did, possibly they praised God, sang, or prayed in a poetic manner. Moses' perspective is seen in his comment to Joshua when he was concerned about two who continued to prophesy. What is interesting is that Moses described the Church when he said, *Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD'S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"*

Read verse 32-35. The people get meat, and a plague.

God sends the people quail, heaped up about a meter deep all around the camp. So they got all the meat they could eat but also, *the LORD struck the people with a very severe plague.*

A Lesson from Chapter 11 Spiritual leadership is a burden from God.

Chapter 12 Miriam's Challenge

Read verses 1-3. Miriam challenged Moses's second marriage

In the statement, *Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married,* the verb *spoke against* is feminine singular indicating that Miriam, Moses' sister was leading this challenge. She probably saw Moses' new wife as a threat to her female dominance in Israel. Apparently Moses married the Cushite after the death of his first wife Zipporah the Midianite (Exodus 2:21). Cushites were Egyptians and there was no command against marrying them (Exodus 34:11, 16). The statement of Moses humility may have been added by Ezra but more likely it is Moses,' or The Lord's, own response to their accusation.

Read verses 4-15. God delivered judgment on Miriam's suggestion

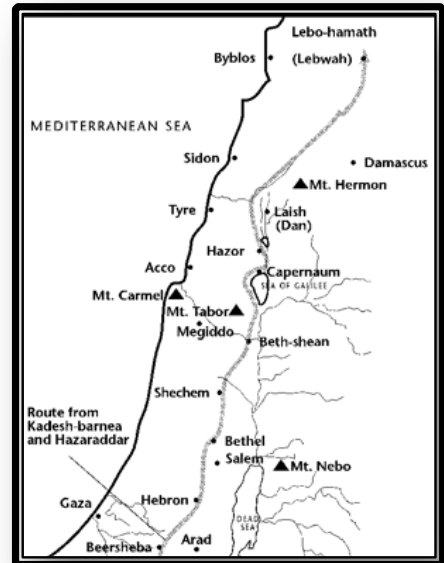
God told the three of them to come outside the tent. *Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent* [probably in the form of God the Son (John 1:18).] Miriam was made leprous then healed (after seven days) at the request of Aaron and Moses. But the interesting thing here is God's response. *If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream... Not so, with My servant Moses... With him I speak mouth to mouth.* The point is God does not usually speak to people.

A Lesson from Chapter 12 God's leaders are the most humble on all the earth.

Chapter 13 Spying Out The Land

Read verses 1-8 & 16. Twelve spies selected.

The Israelites reached Kadesh, a great oasis in the Desert of Zin, which was the northern part of the large wilderness of Paran. There the Lord command them to *Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan*, Apparently that was an answer to the people's request to *send men before us and they shall search us out the land* recorded in Deuteronomy 1:21. Twelve men are selected to spy out the Land. Of special note is Caleb of Judah and Joshua from Ephraim since they are the only ones willing to obey God and take the land. They are also the only ones to survive the 40 years (one at Sinai and 39 in the wilderness) and enter the land. For reasons not given, Moses changed Joshua's name from הוֹשֻׁעַ (Hoshua) "salvation" to Joshua יהוֹשֻׁעַ (Ye Hoshua) "Yahweh is salvation".



Read verses 17-29. The report about the land

It certainly does flow with milk and honey... Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.

Read verses 30-33 Two different opinions about the report

Caleb said *We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it. But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us."*

A Lesson from Chapter 13 Trusting God involves overcoming Giants.

Chapter 14 Rejecting God's Command To Enter The Land

Read verses 1-10. The people reject Joshua and Caleb's advice *the LORD is with us; do not fear* But they really rejected God. *Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword?*

Read verses 11-19. The Lords judgment and Moses' appeal to, *Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness*

Verse 11 tells us faith is trusting objectively verifiable evidence. The signs in Egypt were done so *that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you* (Exodus 4:5).

For the second time (in verse 12, the first was in Exodus 32:10) God told Moses, *I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they*, and Moses appealed to God's character (in verses 13-18, verse 18 being one of the great statement of the Bible about the character of God).

Read verses 20-38. The Pardon, the punishment, and the exception

Verse 22 says, *they have put Me to the test these ten times*. Ryrie includes the following list:

- (1) At the Red Sea (Ex. 14:11-12); (2) at Marah (Ex. 15:23-24); (3) in the wilderness of Sin (Ex. 16:2); (4) and (5) in connection with manna (Ex. 16:20, 27); (6) at Rephidim (Ex. 17:1-3); (7) at Horeb (Ex. 32:7); (8) at Taberah (Num. 11:1); (9) the complaint of the rabble (11:4); and (10) at Kadesh-barnea (Num. 14).

In verse 24 God said of Caleb (1) *he has had a different spirit and* (2) [he] *has followed Me fully*.

Read verse 39-45. Repentance plus disobedience

The disobedient Israelites repented but instead of bearing the consequences of their sins they decided to ignore the judgment of God and disobey the new commandment of God.

A Lesson from Chapter 14. Repentance for disobedience requires obedience.

Questions

1. The instructions about the Passover in Numbers 9:1-12 were given,
 - A. Before Numbers Chapter 1
 - B. After Numbers Chapter 1 but before Chapter 2
 - C. After Numbers Chapter 8
2. The longest the tabernacle remained in one place before it moved again was,
 - A. One month
 - B. One year
 - C. Two years
3. Moses wanted Hobab his brother-in-law to travel with them in order to,
 - A. Bring the Midianites in to the land
 - B. Help Moses organize the people
 - C. Find them places to camp in the wilderness
4. After only three days of travel (10:33-36) the people began to complain resulting in fire in the outskirts of the camp (11:1-3). They complained about,
 - A. Moses' authority
 - B. The lack of tasty food
 - C. We don't know what they complained about
5. The people complained about the manna because they wanted,
 - A. More food
 - B. More variety in their food
 - C. Better tasting food
6. When Moses complained to God, he asked God to
 - A. Take the people off his hands
 - B. Take his life
 - C. Get him some help
7. In chapter 12 God told Miriam she should
 - A. Stop trying to be a prophetess
 - B. Stop complaining about Moses' Cushite wife
 - C. Be afraid of complaining about Moses
 - D. All of the above
8. The spies went in to the land after,
 - A. They requested it
 - B. Moses commanded it
 - C. God commanded it
 - D. All of the above
9. The reason the people did not want to go in to the land was,
 - A. They did not think Moses could lead them without their being killed
 - B. They did not believe God could lead them without their being killed
 - C. Those who spied out the land said the people were too strong for them
 - D. All of the above
10. True or False? When the people tried to enter the land they were actually obeying God.



Answers: 1. A; 2. B; 3. C (10:31); 4. C; 5. C (11:6). 6. B; 7. C (12:8); 8. D; 9. C (13:31); 10. False (God's command had changed from "Go in" to "Don't go in").

Chapter 15 Offerings For When They Enter The Land

Read verses 1-16. Burnt offerings when entering the Land

There is hope in the statement (in verse 2) ‘When [כִּי (ki) means *that, because* or *when* but not *if*] you enter the land where you are to live, which I am giving you. The older generation would die in the wilderness but the 20 and under generation would live through the wanderings and enter the land. When they did they would need to make burnt offerings. These were not sin or guilt offering, but votive, fellowship, praise and thankful offerings. The animal sacrifice was to be accompanied by grain and drink offerings, which increased with the size of the animal. [One-tenth of an ephah is about two quarts (2 liters) and one-fourth of a hin is about one quart (one liter).] These offerings were to be offered by the Israelites and by the gentiles who choose to live with them.

Read verses 17-21. The Cake offering

When they began to harvest the grain of the Land they were to offer a cake made from the threshing floor. Notice the same hope of verse 2 is repeated in verse 18.

Read verses 22-36. The difference between intentional and unintentional sin

When the people (nationally or individually) sin unintentionally the priest could offer a burnt offering for them and they would be forgiven. But sin done *defiantly* could not be covered with a sacrifice. [Defiantly רָמָה בְּיָד is literally *with hand high* or *exalted*.] The idea is someone sinning with a hand or fist raised in defiance of God. For example David broke God’s laws but did not act defiantly when confronted with his sin. The example here is the Sabbath breaker. If we are not sure of what God’s commandment is in a certain area, say with food or special days (Romans 14:16-20), we should simply ask God’s forgiveness for what we do not understand. But when we know God’s command and defy it, we are like the one who is *a liar and the truth is not in him* (see 1 John 2:1-4).

Read verses 37-41. Making tassels on the corners of their garments.

[Like “tying a string around the finger,” the *tassels* and *cord* of blue on the edges of their garments were to remind Israel to obey God’s commands (Ryrie Study Bible).]

A Lesson from Chapter 15. When you sin repent, but don’t try to change God’s commands thinking “in my case it’s okay with God.”

Chapter 16 The Rebellion of Korah

Read verses 1-3. Korah assembled the leaders of Israel against Moses.

This took some planning and much discussion because Korah, a Levite, was joined by *two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown*. They have four things to say: **1.** *You have gone far enough, for* **2.** *all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and* **3.** *the LORD is in their midst; so* **4.** *why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?”*

Read verses 4-19. Moses response to Korah and the rebels

Moses was angry especially with Korah, Dathan and Abiram, but appealed to God’s judgment

Read verses 20- 40. God’s response to Korah and the rebels

The ground opened up and they *descend alive into Sheol*, meaning they were buried alive. The word *sheol* occurs 65 times in the Old Testament and can mean the place of the dead (Proverbs 9:18) or as here, the grave where the body is placed at death (Psalms 16:10).

Read verses 41-50. The second rebellion

They rebelled again and Moses made atonement for them again, but not before 14,700 people died.

A Lesson from Chapter 16, Do not rebel against those to whom God has given His written word (the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles of the Bible).

Chapter 17 Aarons' Rod

Read verses 1-9. The vindication of Aaron as the high priest

Because Aaron's priestly authority had also been challenged, God verified Aarons priesthood. Moses collected a *rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' households, twelve rods, and deposited the rods before the LORD in the tent of the testimony. Now on the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds.*

Read verses 10-13. Aaron's Rod is kept to remind the people about God's choice.

Aaron's rod was placed in the Ark of the Covenant, along with the Ten Commandments (Exodus 25:16) and a pot of manna (Exodus 16:33-34). But the people still complained wondering why they were dying in the wilderness.

A Lesson from Chapter 17, *Do not challenge today's priesthood of all believers.*

Chapter 18 The Lord Spoke to Aaron

Read 18:1-7. The Levites assisted Aaron and the priests

Four times Moses records *the Lord spoke (or said) to Aaron* (Exodus 4:27; Numbers 18:1,8, 20). Three of them are in this chapter. God did not describe Aaron's work as a privilege or a blessing. Rather God said: *You and your sons and your father's household with you shall bear the **guilt** (or **iniquity**, also in verse 23) in connection with the sanctuary... and with your priesthood. They could be joined with Aaron and attend to the obligations of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent; but an outsider may not come near you, and the other Levites could not come near to the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar, or both they and you will die.*

Read verses 8-20 The Covenant of Salt

This paragraph includes the gifts, which *everyone of your household who is clean may eat*. It included *all the [meat of the] wave offerings... All the best of the fresh oil and all the best of the fresh wine and of the grain... and... The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land.* [Apparently they sometimes ate too much. Remember 1Samuel 4:18 says the priest *Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy.*]

Read verses 21-32. Tithing to the Levites

The people were to tithe to the Lord and it was given to the Levites. But the Levites had to tithe from that tithe to Aaron, *a tithe of the tithe... the grain from the threshing floor or the full produce from the wine vat.*

A Lesson from Chapter 18 *In the church believers are all cared for by God, but we also have greater responsibility (guilt or iniquity).*



Chapter 19 The Ashes of the Red Heifer

Read verses 1-22. The preparation of the Red Heifer ashes

Leviticus already provided procedures to deal with unwitting contact with a dead animal (Lev 5:2, 5-13), but here we have a unique cleansing: (1) done outside of the camp and (2) performed by any clean person (not just by a priest). Given that this generation (20 and older) of approximately 2 ½ million people would die off over the next 40 years, touching dead bodies would be common and unavoidable. But death was an offense to the holiness of God, hence this unique ritual-cleansing.

A Lesson from Chapter 19 *Respect the holiness of God by keeping the specific details of His commands for this age.*

Chapter 20 The Disobedience of Moses and Aaron

Read verses 1. The 40-year wandering ended where it began – at Kadesh

About 39 years pass between the chapters 19 and 20. *In the first month* of the 40th year after the Exodus they arrived back at Kadesh (modern 'Ain Qedeis) where they had sent the spies (12:16; 13:26). Miriam died and was buried there. We know she died in the 40th year of the wanderings because the next event is the death of Aaron at Mount Hor (20:27-28), which occurred *in the fortieth year after the sons of Israel had come from the land of Egypt, on the first day in the fifth month* (33:38).

Read verses 2-8. The waters of Meribah at Kadesh

The people again complained about their conditions. They said *It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink.* And this was mostly the new generation, 20 years old or younger when they left Egypt, now 60 and younger.

Read verses 9-13. The sin of Moses

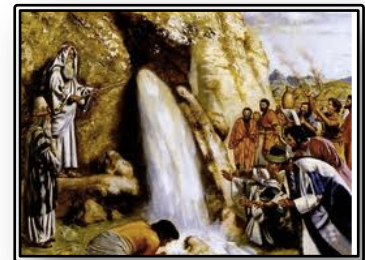
The sin of Moses kept him from entering the land he longed to see.

But just exactly what was his sin? Some say it was to take credit for what God had done previously. Possibly, but it seems unlikely in light of Moses' friendship with God. God said: *Take the rod;*

and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock. But *Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod.* What he did was not follow the word of God **fully**. In chapter 32:11-12 it says:

*None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me **fully** (The same was true of Kings Saul and Solomon – 1 Kings 11:6), except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the LORD **fully**.*

God told Moses' his sin was, *you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy.* So to paraphrase God's word or to change it slightly is to act in unbelief and question the holiness of God.



Read verses 14-21. The Edomites refuse to let the Israelites pass through their land

The Israelites wanted to go from Kadesh east through Edom, South of the Dead Sea. So Moses requested permission from the king of Edom to take the king's highway (20:17), a route that passed from the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqabah) north to Damascus via the Edomite city of Sela (later known as Petra). Moses appealed to Edom as a brother (14) because the Edomites were descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. Their request was refused with a

show of force (v. 20).

Read verses 22-29. Aaron died on Mount Hor

Departing east from Kadesh, Israel came to Mount Hor. Its location is not certain but it is probably Jebel Harun, a short distance northwest of Petra. Moses, having abandoned his plans to go the easier route up the king's highway, now plans to go north up the Arabah to the southeast corner of the Dead Sea, thus bypassing Edom to the east. Aaron died on Mount Hor because of his participation in Moses' sin. His priestly garments and office were transferred to his son Eleazar.

A Lesson from Chapter 20 Forgiveness of sin does not always erase the consequences of sin



Questions

1. The statement of 15: 2 and 18 *When you enter the land where I bring you* refers to,
 - A. All the Israelites and those traveling with them
 - B. All the Israelites 20 years old and younger
 - C. All the Israelites who are obedient when they return to Kadesh-barnea
2. 15:22-36 discusses intentional and unintentional sin, the difference being intentional sin is,
 - A. Premeditated
 - B. Breaking one of God's Laws.
 - C. Disagreeing with one of God's laws
 - D. All of the above.
3. The reason Korah rebelled against Moses (as recorded in Numbers 16) was because,
 - A. Korah believed Moses had lead long enough
 - B. Korah believed Moses had promoted himself to a position of leadership
 - C. Korah believed in something like the priesthood of the believer
 - D. A and B
 - E. All of the above
4. What was in the Arc of the Covenant?
 - A. Aaron's Rod, the ashes of a red heifer, and the 10 commandments
 - B. Aaron's Rod, Moses' staff, and the 10 commandments
 - C. Aaron's Rod, a bowel of manna, and the 10 commandments
5. The other Levites could join Aaron and his sons in the work of the sanctuary but the other Levites,
 - A. Were not to be around outsiders
 - B. Were not to get close to the alter where the animals were sacrificed
 - C. Were not to sacrifice animals
 - D. A and B
 - E. All of the above
6. The Lord spoke to Aaron
 - A. Only one time
 - B. Two times
 - C. Three times
 - D. Four times
7. True or False? The cleansing by the ashes of a red heifer could only be done by a priest or Levite.
8. Which of the following events did NOT happen at Kadesh-barnea.
 - A. They sent out spies in to the Land from there
 - B. Miriam died there
 - C. Aaron died there
9. Moses' sin was,
 - A. Pride
 - B. Anger
 - C. Unbelief
10. True or False? When Aaron died the new high priest was his son Eleazar.

Answers: 1. B; 2. C (all known sin is premeditated and breaking God's Laws, intentional sin is defying on of God's laws). 3. E; 4. C; 5.D; 6. D; 7. False; 8. C; 9. C; 10. True.

Chapter 21 From the Negev To The Transjordan Highlands

Read verses 1-3. Encountering the Canaanites

Arad was a Canaanite city about 20 miles east-northeast of Beersheba. The king of Arad was apparently threatened by the Israelites move from Kadesh to Mount Hor. So the king of Arad attacked Israel and took some prisoners. Somehow the Israelites collectively as a nation made a vow to the LORD that if He would deliver the Canaanites over to them they would *utterly destroy their cities*. Destroy חָרַם (charam) has the idea of devoting them to God keeping nothing from them for themselves.

Read verses 4-9. The Curse of the Poisonous Serpents

After leaving Kadesh-barnia the Israelites traveled to Mt. Hor (where Aaron died). After they left Mount Hor the people again complained about the desert conditions. God sent poisonous snakes to bite the people. Then the people said, *we have sinned* and they asked Moses to, *intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents*. Instead of removing the serpents, God told Moses to make a golden serpent *that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live*. Interestingly God did not *remove the serpents* as he did not remove the curse of Genesis 3 or the curse of Noah's flood, or the curse that scattered Israel. Repentance did not erase the curse, but God did supply salvation in the midst of the curse. The Golden serpent is a type of Christ *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life* (John 3:14-15).

Verses 10-35 Conquering the Transjordan

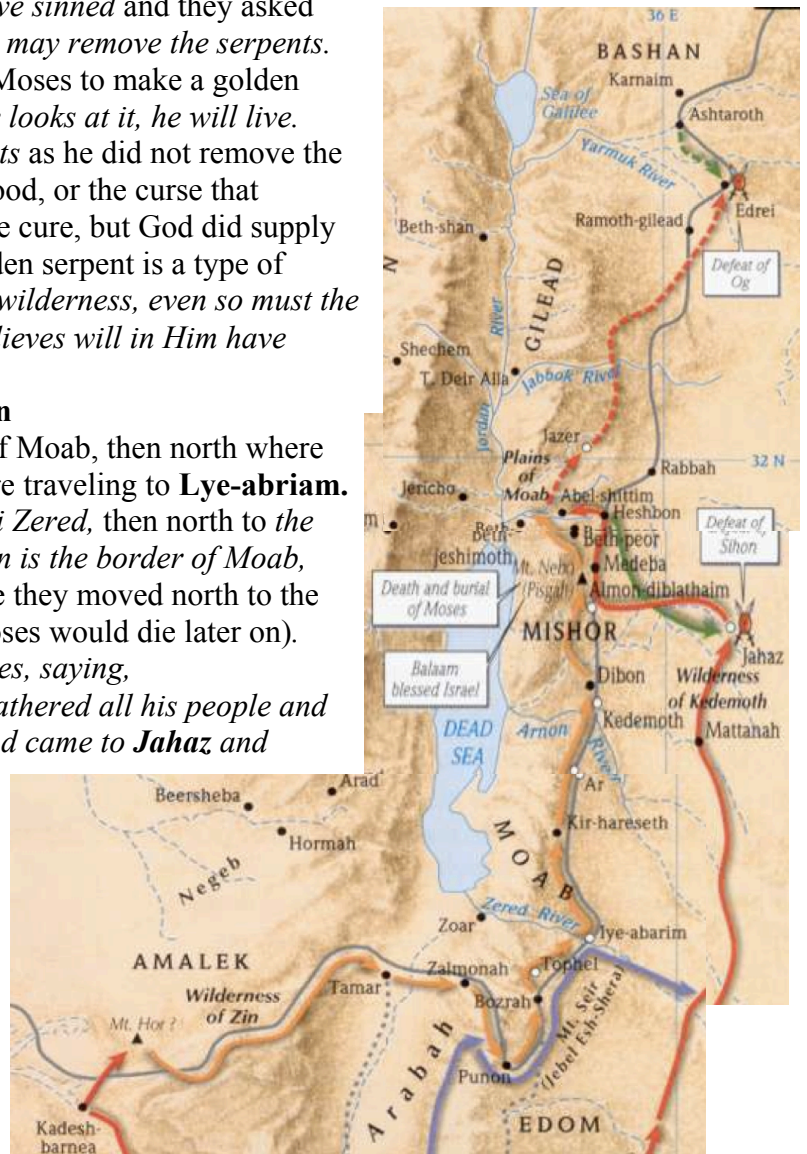
From Mt. Hor the Israelites traveled south of Moab, then north where they received the curse of the serpents before traveling to **Lye-abriam**. *From there they set out and camped in Wadi Zered, then north to the other side of the Arnon river... for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites*. From there they moved north to the top of **Pisgah** (this is on Mt Nebo where Moses would die later on). Here Moses asked Sihon, king of the Amorites, saying,

*Let me pass through your land. But Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and came to **Jahaz** and fought against Israel. Then Israel struck him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok. Then Israel lived in **Heshbon**, the city of Sihon and in all her villages.*

*Next, Moses sent to spy out **Jazer**, and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites who were there. Then they turned and went up by the way of **Bashan**, and Og the king of Bashan went out with all his people, for battle at **Edrei**.* There

the Israelites killed Og and his sons and all his people, until there was no remnant left him; and they possessed his land. [The **bold** are place where we are quite certain of their locations.]

A Lesson from Chapter 21 *Salvation form God does not necessarily remove the curse, it provides deliverance in the midst of the curse, it.*



Chapter 22-24 Balaam and Balak

Chapter 22 Balak's Invitation to Balaam

Read verses 1-6. Balak's fears

After defeating the Transjordan kings *Sihon, king of the Amorites* and *Og the king of Bashan* the Israelites set up camp in the Plains of Moab, opposite Jericho. When Balak, king of Moab, saw this he was frightened and proceeded to defend himself with two maneuvers. One was to solicit the help of the Midianites and the other was to seek the help of the strange prophet Balaam, who lived *at Pethor, which is near the River*, probably the Euphrates up in Aram/Syria (23:7). Some suggest this is near the city of Mari, discovered in 1933 in the Euphrates Valley. Many cuneiform tablets discovered there revealed the existence of a large cult of prophets, diviners and seers, whose activities resemble those of Balaam. Actually Balak had nothing to fear because God told Moses not to bother the Ammonites, or the Moabites, descendants of Lot by the incest of his daughters (Genesis 19:30-38), or the Edomites, the descendants of Esau (Deuteronomy 2:5-9 & 19).

Read verses 7-20. The pursuit of Balaam

Balak sent messengers to get Balaam to come and curse Israel, two times. On the first occasion God told Balaam two things (1) *Do not go with them*, and (2) *you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed* (verse 12). The second time Balaam sought an answer from God about what God had already answered. Apparently Balaam's motive was materialistic (2 Peter 2:15). This time God said *go with them; but only the word which I speak to you shall you do* (verse 20).

Read verses 21-35. The donkey, and the angel of God, speak to Balaam

So Balaam went with them *but God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him*.

Balaam's donkey saw the angel, stopped, and talked to Balaam, twice. Then the angel of God told Balaam his way was contrary to God and if it weren't for the donkey He would have killed Balaam. Then the angel repeated the second message to go but only speak what God says.

Read verses 36-41. Balak still wants Balaam's help

Balaam told Balak he could only speak God's word, but Balak still thought Balaam would curse Israel. Balaam accompanied Balak to a pagan high place for a sacrifice. Balaam knew something about God, but he also used omens (v. 7; 24:1) and soothsaying (Josh. 13:22)/

A Lesson from Chapter 22 Don't ask God to reconsider what He has commanded



Chapter 23 Three Prophetic Orations

Three times Balak called upon Balaam to observe the huge number of Israelites and call on the Lord to curse them. The first was at Kiriath Huzoth (location unknown). The second was at *Pisgah* which is Mount Nebo (Deuteronomy 34:1) or the range of which Nebo is the highest peak. The third is the top of Peor, a mountain near the town of Beth Peor (Deuteronomy 3:29; 4:46), close to Israel's encampment in the plains of Moab. Each time Balak does animal sacrifices on seven altars and God puts words in Balaam's mouth in the form of a poetic prophesy which blesses Israel. The three observations, of the immense size of the camp of the Israelites, confirm the large number (possibly 2 ½ million) of the decedents of those who came out of Egypt.

The point of all three orations was to proclaim a blessing rather than a curse on the future of Israel. The key statement may be verse 19, *God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*

A Lesson from Chapter 23 God does not lie and He fulfills all He has spoken

Chapter 24 Balaam's Final Oration

Read verses 1-2. Balaam abandons omens

These verses tell us that Balaam had been mixing his appeals to God with sorcery. Now he gives up on that and *the Spirit of God came upon him*. This no more proves that Balaam was a true prophet than the coming of the Spirit on Saul (1 Samuel 10:6, 10-11). Nonetheless his prophecy was true.

Read verses 3-9. Future abundance and redemption of Israel

In this poetic prophesy Balaam receives a vision while lying down with his eyes wide open. The gardens and water refer to the future prosperity of Israel, probably under the kings. The reference to king Agag is not the Amalekite king Saul kept alive. That was over 300 years later (1 Samuel 15:8). Most likely Agag was a title of a long line of Amalekite kings named Agag, like the name/titles Abimelech (Genesis 20:1-2; 26:1) and Jabin (Joshua 11:1; Judges 4:2) and Harod (Matthew 2:1; Acts 13:1).

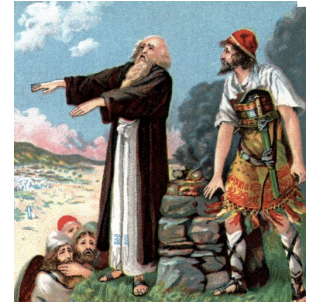
Read verses 10-25

Balak sent Balaam home in anger, but before he left Balaam made four significant predictions.

(1) The coming of a future leader in Israel, ultimately the Messiah *I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel*, (Revelation 22:16), (2)

Israel's victory over (a) Moab, (b) Seir (Edom, Genesis 32:3), (c) the Amalekites, and (d) the Kenites (Midianites); (3) The temporary captivity of Israel by *Asshur* (the Assyrians), (4) That ships will come from from *Kittim*, probably Cyprus and the Mediterranean, (24) and afflict *Eber* (the Hebrews) and *Asshur* (the Assyrians) but they also *will come* to destruction.

A Lesson from Chapter 24 Just because God uses you, does not mean He likes you.



Chapter 25 Sin With the Moabites

Read verses 1-5. Moabite women entice Israelite men

In the statement *they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods*, the verb *they invited* is famine indicating it was the women who did the inviting. It resulted in idolatry and fornication. Apparently Balaam advised the Moabites to tempt Israel this way (31:16). Revelation 2:14 says Balaam *taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication*. Most likely prostitution was part of the worship of *Baal of Peor*. God told Moses to execute his own leaders. *so that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel*. Moses (apparently correctly) understood that to be *Each of you slay his men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor*.

Read verses 6-15. The Judgment of one man saves the people

Verses 6-8 describe a great conflict of strong wills, one to defy the judgment of God and another to take a stand for the judgment of God. A man named Zimri (14) *brought to his relatives a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting*. With equal resolve, but for the judgment of God, *Phinehas... the priest, saw it, [and] he arose from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand, and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and pierced both of them through*. Because of this God stopped the plague. But 24,000 had already died. This is referenced in Deuteronomy 4:3-4; Psalm 106:26-29; Hosea 9:10; 1 Corinthians 10:8. The last reference of 23,000 probably does not include those who died of the wounds over the following days.

A Lesson from Chapter 25 Take a strong stand for the Judgments of God

Questions

1. The vow Israel made in Numbers 21 concerning the king of Arad was,
 - A. If God delivered Arad's people into their hand then they would utterly destroy all the Canaanite cities.
 - B. If God delivered the king of Arad into their hand then they would destroy the city of Arad.
 - C. If God delivered the city of Arad into their hand then they would take nothing from that city for themselves.
2. In the incident the poisonous serpents in Numbers 21:4-9, the Israelites asked God to,
 - A. Save them from the poisonous serpents
 - B. Remove the poisonous serpents
 - C. Kill the poisonous serpents.
3. From Mt. Hor Israel proceeded,
 - A. North
 - B. South
 - C. East
 - D. West
4. Which of the following kings was NOT defeated by Israel
 - A. Sihon
 - B. Og
 - C. Balak
5. Balak, king of Moab tried to get to get help from,
 - A. Moses' relatives
 - B. Lot's relatives
 - C. Esau's relatives
6. When Balak sent messengers to Balaam, God did not want Balaam to,
 - A. Go with them
 - B. Go with them if he cursed the Israelites
 - C. Go with them if said something other than what God spoke to him
7. Balaam's donkey spoke to him because Balaam was committing,
 - A. Known sin
 - B. Unknown sin
 - C. Secret sin
8. The first three orations of Balaam proclaimed that God is,
 - A. Eternal
 - B. Holy
 - C. Unchanging
9. True or False. The fact that God finally prophesied blessings on Israel means that He forgave Balaam for his sorcery and disobedience.
10. The reason God stopped the death plague on Israel was because of,
 - A. Repentance
 - B. Obedience
 - C. Murder

Answers: 1. A; 2. B; 3. C; 4. C. 5. A; 6. A (22:22). 7. B (22:34); 8. C (23:19); 9. False; 10. C.

Chapter 26 Renumbering the People

Read verses 1-3. A new census is commanded

The generation of Israelites (those over 20) who left Egypt died before the Conquest of the Land. The need for a new census is uncertain, possibly to demonstrate God's faithfulness or to allow Joshua to plan for war. As with the one 38 years earlier (1:20-46) this was only for the men 20 years old and older who were fit for military action.

Concerning verses 4-51. The new census is carried out

Some of the tribal numbers increased and some decreased. For example Simeon lost 37,100 (14; 1:23); Gad lost 5,150 (18;1:25); Judah gained 1,900 (22;1:27); Issachar gained 9,900 (v. 25;1:29). Ryrie reports that;

The total number of adult males had decreased by only 1,820, positioning them at full strength to enter Canaan (v. 51; cf. 1:46). During the years of wandering 1,200,000 people had died.

The smallest population was the five clans of Simeon, 22,200 (12-14), explained by Simeon's involvement in the Baal of Peor judgment (25:14-15). The descendants of Judah are from his son Shelah and the two sons Perez and Zerah, which he had with his daughter-in-law (Genesis 38:5-30). Remember, Perez is the forefather of David and Jesus.

The death toll is amazing. 38 years x 365 days in a year = 13,870 days. 1,200,000 deaths divided by 13,870 days = 86 people who died every day. That divided by 24 = between 3 and 4 people who died every hour, on average.

Special mention is made of two Rubenites, *Dathan and Abiram who were called by the congregation, who contended against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up along with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, so that they became a warning.*

Read verses 52-56. Principles for dividing the land

God gave two basic commands concerning the division of the land.

1. *Each shall be given their inheritance according to those who were numbered of them.* That is, each would get an amount of land corresponding to the size of the tribe.

2. *The land shall be divided by lot.* That, is the location was choose by chance, or possibly by using the Urim and Thummin of the high priest (Exodus 28:30).

Read verses 57-65. Numbering the Levites

The Levites were numbered separately because they were not to participate as military soldiers. *Those who were numbered of them were 23,000, every male from a month old and upward.* This is 1000 more than the first census 38 years earlier (3:39).

Verse 59 says, *The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and she bore to Amram: Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam.* Levi moved to Egypt when he was about 50, Moses departed when he was 80 and the sojourn in Egypt was 430 years, So obviously this is not meant to include every generation between Levi and Moses, Aaron and Miriam.

A Lesson from Chapter 26 Human disobedience affects the destiny of humans, but not the plans of God.

Chapter 27 Daughters inheritance and Joshua's Commission.

Read verses 1-11. A law for the daughter's inheritance

The allocation of territory was to tribes, clans, and families, through their sons. But the man Zelophehad, of the tribe of Manasseh, *was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but he died in his own sin.* In other words he was of the generation that died during the wilderness wanderings because of the disobedience at Kadash-barnea. *And he had no sons* so the family name would pass away. Moses had no law about this so he brought it to the Lord. God said, *the daughters of Zelophehad are right ... you shall transfer the inheritance of their father to them.* Then God extended the inheritance law to brothers, uncles, and nearest of kin.

Read verses 12-23. Moses is succeeded by Joshua

God told Moses to go up to the *mountain of Abarim*, which is the range of mountains on the east side of the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea. There, Moses would die without going into the land because God said *you rebelled against My command to treat Me as holy before their eyes at the water.* So Moses asked God about a successor and God directed him to appoint Joshua. God said two notable things about Joshua. One, he was *a man in whom is the Spirit*, and two, God spoke to Moses in words but He would speak to Joshua through *Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD.*

A Lesson from Chapter 27 The Judgments of God are based on His Holiness

Chapter 28-29 Offerings When Living In The Land

Read 28:1-15. Three ongoing offerings

There were daily sacrifices, Sabbath sacrifices, and monthly sacrifices. Each was to include: (1) animal sacrifices, (2) a grain or meal offering, and (3) a drink offering. Each had specific instructions and they were to be burned up or poured out, not consumed by the priests. God calls these *My food* (or *bread*). These offerings no doubt reflect the kind of food the Israelites themselves ate. Notice also that the drink offering included the pouring out of a *strong drink*, and *wine*.

Read 28:16-25. Passover offerings

The **Passover** is described/commanded three times (Exodus 12:3-11; Leviticus 23:5-8, and here). The Passover lambs were slaughtered on the 14th of the first month (Nisan) roasted and eaten that evening. The next 7 days were a **Feast of Unleavened Bread** (Exodus 12:15-20). The first and last days were a Sabbath with their sacrifices. And all this was in addition to the regular daily sacrifices.

Read 28: 26-31. The offering of Weeks (later called Pentecost)

This was 50 days after the first Sunday (**First Fruits**) after the first Sabbath after the Passover. It was also a Sabbath day with all three (animal, grain, and drink) offerings.

Read 29:1-6. The offerings for the festival of Trumpets

Chapter 29 describes the fall festivals. The first day of the seventh month is the blowing of Trumpets or the New Moon festival. It also required animal, meal, and drink offerings.

Read 29:7-11. The Day of Atonement

On the 10th day of that (seventh) month there was to be *a holy convocation, and you shall humble yourselves; you shall not do any work.*

Read 29: 12-40. The Feast of Tabernacles (so titled in Leviticus 23:34)

This began with a Sabbath on **the 15th day of the seventh month, and ran** through the 22nd day. It required a great number of sacrifices, probably because it celebrated the end of the yearly harvest. Each day required animal meal and drink offerings.

A Lesson from Chapter 28-29 Remember the Lord, all year long

Chapter 30 The Vows of Women

Read verses 1-2. The man's vows

All men were held accountable for their vows *he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth*. For example, that's what caused Joshua grief when he was tricked and vowed to protect the Gibeonites. But men are only mentioned in contrast. The chapter is about the woman's vows.

Read verses 3-8. The vow of the unmarried and married woman

A vow made by an unmarried woman could be invalidated by her father. The vow of a married woman could be invalidated by her husband.

Read verses 9-16. The vow of the previously married woman.

A widow or divorcee must keep her vow the same as a man. Also if a husband waited a while after his wife made a vow, the vow was in force (and could be nullified only by an appropriate sin offering – Leviticus 5:4-13). It is clear from the Bible that men and women are different.

A Lesson from Chapter 30 Men are responsible for the decisions of their wives, and their unmarried daughters living in their home.

Chapter 31 The Midianite War

Read verses 1-6. God's vengeance on the Midianites

This was Moses' last assignment. Three things should be noted: (1) God described Moses' upcoming death as *you will be gathered to your people*. This seems to presuppose a positive afterlife existence. (2) The Midianite war was for the vengeance of God. The presence of Eleazar the priest and articles from the sanctuary show this war was all about God, not Israel. (3) The reason (given in 25:16-18) was Midian's role in Israel's immorality and idolatry at Baal of Peor.

Read verses 7-18. The slaughter of the Midianites, except for the virgins

The war was successful and all Midianite men including five kings and the prophet Balaam were killed. Their towns were destroyed and plunder taken. But the women and children and animals were spared. This angered Moses because these women seduced Israel to idolatry and sexual immorality. However, Moses granted that the virgins could live because they were not involved at Baal of Peor.

Read verses 19-24. Purification before entering the camp

There were two kinds of purification before entering the camp after the Midianite war. First, the soldiers were unclean because they touched dead bodies. They were to be ceremonially cleansed with water (treated with the ashes of a red heifer, as described in Chapter 19). Also they were to wait 7 days and wash all their clothes. Second, the articles taken needed to be purified. The rule was if it could stand up to fire it was to pass through fire, if it could not it was to be washed with water.

Read verses 25-47. Dividing up the booty

Eleazar and the heads of the households divided up the booty, half among the soldiers and half among those who did not go to battle. But out of the people's share God required one in fifty as a tax given to the Levites, and out of the soldiers' share only one in five hundred. This included 32 virgin women who apparently functioned somehow as servants to the priests.

Read verses 48-54. A gift of thanksgiving

A head count showed no Israeli soldier had been killed so they brought a huge gift of gold.

A Lesson from Chapter 31 God's soldiers should be rewarded, but everybody should give a portion to God.



Questions

1. The new census taken after the wilderness wandering revealed that their numbers
 - A. Increased
 - B. Decreased
 - C. Stayed the same
2. On the average, how many people died every day during the 38 years in the wilderness.
 - A. 86
 - B. 54
 - C. Between 3 and 4
3. The smallest tribe in the census (probably because of their sin at Baal of Peor) was,
 - A. Judah
 - B. Benjamin
 - C. Simeon
4. Which was NOT used as a basis for dividing up the land among the tribes of Israel.
 - A. The size of the tribe
 - B. The obedience of the tribe in going out to war
 - C. The casting of lots
5. The daughters of Zelophehad complained to Moses because,
 - A. Their father died without leaving an inheritance
 - B. They received less inheritance than the male decedents
 - C. They received no inheritance at all
6. Arrange the seven festivals of Israel in chronological beginning from spring to fall: Passover, Tabernacles/booths, Weeks/Pentecost, Trumpets, First Fruits, Day of Atonement, Unleavened bread.
7. The daily sacrifices, Sabbath sacrifices, and monthly sacrifices all required:
 - A. A burnt offering, a meal offering, and a peace offering
 - B. Animal sacrifices, a guilt offering, and a sin offering
 - C. Animal sacrifices, a meal offering, and a drink offering
8. A woman's vow could be nullified if she was
 - A. Too young
 - B. Living with her father
 - C. Never married
9. The reason God ordered the Israelites to destroy the Midianites was,
 - A. To get revenge
 - B. To protect Israel from their idolatry
 - C. To punish them for tempting Israel
10. The tax from the Midianite war, for the people that were not soldiers, was
 - A. On out of every 10
 - B. On out of ever 50
 - C On out of ever 500

Answers: 1. B; 2. A; 3. C; 4. B; 5. C; 6. A. Passover, B. Unleavened bread, C. First Fruits, D. Weeks/Pentecost, E. Trumpets, F. Day of Atonement, G. Tabernacles/booths. 7. C; 8. C; 9. A (31:2); 10. B.

Chapter 32 The Settlements East of the Jordan

Read verses 1-5. A Request

The tribes of Reuben and Gad asked Moses if they could settle in the Transjordan highlands because there was a lot of grassy flat land there, ideal for raising livestock. And they had much livestock.

Read verses 6-15. Moses' response

Moses' response was based in the fear of God. God had punished their fathers by making them wander in the wilderness for refusing to go in to the land. So Moses thought this would discourage the other tribes thus inciting the wrath of God. Moses falsely accused Reuben and Gad of evil motives when he said, *you have risen up in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men,*

Read verses 16-32. The agreement

This led to a discussion with Moses. We are not sure who represented the Reubenites and the Gadites but the people (anyway the leadership) of those tribes seemed to be in agreement. They said they would help conquer Canaan but requested that they first be able to build cities for the protection of their families and pens for their livestock. Moses agreed to this with a warning for them to keep their word.

Read verses 32-42. The building projects of Gad, Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh

A Lesson from Chapter 32 If you error, error on the side of the fear of God



Chapter 33 The Record of the Journey From Egypt

Verses 1-49. The places where the Israelites camped during their Journey

This is a record of the greatest mass migration of people in all of history. Most of these locations are unknown today, but they were real places verifying that this was a real historical event.

One key issue is where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry land, and therefore the location of Mount Horeb/Sinai. This chapter does not determine that answer. But chapter 21 told us *they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom* (Numbers 21:4). That could only be the Gulf of Aqaba. The name *Red Sea* is the same Hebrew name *Red Sea* where they crossed on dry land. Also Deuteronomy 1:2 tells us they went *from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea*. *Mount Seir* is the range north of the Gulf of Aqaba. Therefore it seems the original Red Sea crossing was in the middle of the current Gulf of Aqaba, making Mount Horeb/Sinai in today's Saudi Arabia. The Apostle Paul agrees that it's *Mount Sinai in Arabia* (Galatians 4:25). The traditional site at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula was then, and is today, in Egypt not Arabia.

This passage also tells us Aaron was 123 years old when he died at Mt. Hor. So he was three years older than Moses.

Read verses 50-56. God's warning concerning the Canaanites living in the land

God gave two basic principles: (1) drive them out completely, and (2) destroy their worship places. But the Israelites did not completely drive out the Canaanites. Most of the kings did not even destroy their high places of worship. This resulted in the northern tribes being exiled to Assyria in 722BC, the southern tribes to Babylon in 586BC. So Israel held the land for approximately 1000 years.

A Lesson from Chapter 33 Remove all symbols of other religions from your live

Chapter 34 The Borders of the Land

Read verses 1-12. The borders defined

Their southern boundary was to run from the *Salt Sea* (Dead Sea) southwest to *Kadesh-barnea*, then northwest to the *brook of Egypt* (probably the Wadi el-Arish). Then the line went north along the Mediterranean to *Mount Hor* (probably Mount Hermon, not the Hor of 20:22, where Aaron died). The line then went east to some places we cannot positively identify, but probably northeast of Damascus. Then it came south down to *the Sea of Chinnereth* (The Sea of Galilee) and along the east side of the Jordan to the *Salt Sea* (Dead Sea). From this tiny land, about 160 miles (260 kilometers) by 50 miles (80 kilometers), God brought His revelation to the world.

Verses 13-29. Those who would distribute the land

Those who were to distribute the land were *Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun*.

They were also told, *You shall take one leader of every tribe to apportion the land for inheritance.*

A Lesson from Chapter 34 *The size of our earthly ministry does not determine our impact for God on the world.*

Chapter 35 Special Cities

Read verses 1-8 Cities for the Levites

The Levites received no territory among the tribes of Israel. Not all Levites would function as servants at the tabernacle. Most Levites had to live somewhere else and needed some place to pasture their livestock. The solution was to place them in 48 cities scattered among the land. The larger tribes would give them more cities than the smaller tribes. Each city was to also have an allotted pastureland. The six cities of refuge were included in the 48. [The chart is from the Ryrie Study Bible.]

Read verses 9-15 The Cities of Refuge

Murder required the death penalty. But *the manslayer who has killed any person unintentionally may flee* to one of the six cities of refuge *until he stands before the congregation for trial.*

Read verses 16-34 Murder vs. Manslaughter

The definition of murder: (a) included premeditation, (b) was determined by more than one witness, and (c) considered hatred as evidence. One who fled to the city of refuge was subject to trial, and if found innocent he was to live in that city until the high priest died. The guilty murderer was executed, not by the state but by a personal avenger. No ransom could release a murderer or one confined to a city of refuge. The key passage is verses 33-34, they were not to defile the land because the Lord was living in their midst.

A Lesson from Chapter 35 *Don't defile your body because it is a temple God*

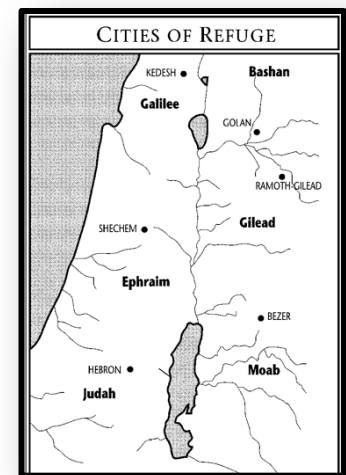
Chapter 36 The Inheritance Must Stay In The Tribes

Read verses 1-12. Marriage between tribes is forbidden because it transfers inheritance

Read verse 13. *These are the commandments and the ordinances which the LORD commanded to the sons of Israel through Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho.*

It seems that the whole book of Numbers was revealed to Moses during their last encampment *in the plains of Moab*. This also confirms the verbal inerrancy and Mosaic authorship of the book.

A Lesson from Chapter 36 Jesus said, *If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*



Questions

1. The tribes that wanted to settle in the Transjordan Highlands were,
 - A. Ephraim and Manasseh
 - B. Reuben and Gad
 - C. Zebulon and Naphtali
2. Which of the following reasons did Moses NOT give for objecting to the above request?
 - A. They didn't want to go to war
 - B. They would influence the other tribes to not go to war
 - C. They would begin to follow the gods of the Moabites
 - D. They would bring the wrath of God, as their fathers did.
3. According to the Apostle Paul Mount Sinai is in,
 - A. The Sinai Peninsula
 - B. Saudi Arabia
 - C. The wilderness of Sin
4. Moses' brother Aaron died at the age of,
 - A. 120
 - B. 121
 - C. 123
5. The eastern border of Israel was to,
 - A. Follow the Jordan River
 - B. Follow the Jordan River south of the Sea of Galilee
 - C. Follow the Transjordan highland east of the Jordan River
6. The borders of the land were given to Israel through,
 - A. Moses
 - B. Joshua
 - C. Eleazar
7. The tribal boundaries were given to Israel through,
 - A. Moses
 - B. Joshua
 - C. Eleazar
8. How many cities of refuge were not Levite cities
 - A. 6
 - B. 42
 - C. 48
9. If someone killed another person, fled to a city of refuge and was found **innocent** of murder,
 - A. He could return to his home
 - B. He had to live in the city of refuge until the high priest died
 - C. He had to live in the city of refuge for seven years
10. If someone killed another person, fled to a city of refuge and was found **guilty** of murder,
 - A. He was to be killed by the whole congregation
 - B. He was to be killed by the witnesses of the murder
 - C. He was to be killed by a personal avenger

Answers: 1. B; 2. C; 3. B (Galatians 4:25); 4.C; 5.B (verses 11-12); 6. A; 7. B and C (34:17). 8. B (35:6); 9. B. 10. C (35:24-25).

This concludes our study of the book of Numbers