# Numbers Commentaries

**LEVITICUS**

**DEUTERONOMY**

## BOOK OF NUMBERS

### RESOURCES

Numbers Commentary, Sermon, Illustration, Devotional

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### THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

"Wilderness Wandering"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WALKING</th>
<th>WANDERING</th>
<th>WAITING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 1-12</td>
<td>Numbers 13-25</td>
<td>Numbers 26-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counting &amp; Camping</td>
<td>12 Spies &amp; Death in Wilderness</td>
<td>Last Days of Moses as Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nu 1-4</td>
<td>Nu 13-16</td>
<td>Nu 33-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleansing &amp; Congregation Nu 5-8</td>
<td>Aaron &amp; Levites in Wilderness Nu 17-18</td>
<td>Sections, Sanctuaries &amp; Settlements Nu 34-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carping &amp; Complaining Nu 9-12</td>
<td>Serpent of Brass &amp; Story of Balaam Nu 21-25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Law & Order | Rebellion & Disorder | New Laws for the New Order |
| Old Generation | Tragic Transition | New Generation |

### Preparation for the Journey: Moving Out

- At Sinai
  - Mt Sinai

### Participation in the Journey: Moving On

- To Moab
  - Mt Hor

### Prize at end of the Journey: Moving In

- At Moab
  - Mt Nebo

### En Route to

- Kadesh (Mt Sinai)
- En Route to Nowhere (Wilderness)
- En Route to Canaan (Plains of Moab)

### Time:

- A Few Weeks to 2 Months
- 38 years, 3 months, 10 days
- A Few Months

Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One"
(Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)

Author: Moses

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**Key Words (NAS95):** Service (41x/37v), sin/sins (49x), Passover (11x/10v), covenant (5x), holy (38x/35v), atonement (17x/15v), offering(s) (296x/167v), "the LORD spoke to" (47x), war (31x/30v), wilderness (48x/44v), tent/tabernacle (93v), cloud (20x/16v), curse(s) (23x/19v)

Also in the KJV the phrases "thou shalt" occurs 208x/154v and "thou shalt not" occurs...
OUTLINE OF THE BOOK--

Forty Years of Wandering (Deut 1-4)

Promise of Blessings for Obedience and Curses for Disobedience (Deut 5-28)

The Palestinian Covenant (Deut 29,30)

Joshua Appointed Moses' Successor (Deut 31)

The Farewell Song of Moses (Deut 32)

Final Blessings for the Tribes; Moses' Death (Deut 33,34)

See Much More Detailed Outline of Numbers

Christ in the Book of Numbers: Portrayed as our "Lifted-Up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)

- See Christ in the Old Testament by A M Hodgkin
- See The Old Testament Presents... Reflections of Christ by Paul R Van Gorder

- Spiritual Warfare in the Book of Numbers-Chuck Huckaby
- Introduction to the Book of Numbers – John MacArthur
- Numbers – Analysis – James Van Dine
- Numbers – Living Messages-G Campbell Morgan
- Numbers 1-19 Synthetic Bible Studies - including spiritual lessons
- Numbers 20-36 Synthetic Bible Studies – James Gray
- Numbers The Incomplete Christian Life – Ray Stedman – very practical
- Theology of Numbers – Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Ray Stedman - Now we come to the book of Numbers. In Numbers we have dramatically set forth what is perhaps the hardest lesson a Christian has to learn -- to trust God instead of his own reason. This is where we struggle, isn't it? We think that what we want to do and the way we want to do it is the right way. The hardest struggle we have, even as these Israelites had, is to learn to believe that God knows what he is talking about and that what he tells us is the truth, and is for our good, and to operate on that basis despite what friends and others around are telling us concerning the right way. Proverbs puts it so graphically, "There is a way which seems right to a man, and its end is the way to death." (Pr 14:12) The book of Numbers is a picture of that experience in the believer. You will recognize, of course, that it is the experience of Romans 7 where the unhappy, defeated Christian, who is his own worst enemy, is being disciplined by God because God as a father loves him. He is experiencing in the midst of this discipline the fatherly love and care of God and protection from his enemy. That is what the book of Numbers portrays. It is a picture of people who have come out of Egypt but who have not yet reached Canaan. They had the faith to
follow God out of the bondage and slavery of sin but have not yet come into the fullness of liberty and rest in the Holy Spirit -- Canaan being a picture of the Spirit-filled life. (Overview of Numbers- The Incomplete Christian Life - Recommended)

Henrietta Mears - The children of Israel were saved to serve. So is every child of God today. Beware of unbelief! The apostle Paul says to us, "You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?" (Galatians 5:7). Unbelief hinders blessing. God tells why we cannot enter into His blessings (Hebrews 3:19). This book might be called the Wilderness Wandering from Sinai to the border of Canaan, the land of promise, covering about forty years. Numbers is also called the Book of the March and the Roll Call (Numbers 33:1-2). It might, too, be called the Book of Murmurings because from beginning to end it is filled with the spirit of rebellion against God. Read what God says about this in Psalm 95:10. Numbers is indeed the book of the wilderness, recording the pitiable failure of Israel at Kadesh-barnean, and the consequent wanderings and experiences of the people in the wilderness. It records the pilgrimage, warfare, service and failure of the second generation of the nation after the Exodus from Egypt. This, however, is not all the message of Numbers. The first ten chapters give us the divine legislation; Numbers 11-20 tells the story of the nation's failure; but the closing chapters of the book record Israel's return to Jehovah's favor and final victory, even in the wilderness.

While the annals of many powerful nations of that same time are lost to the world, these of a comparative handful of people are preserved. The reason for this is that the Messiah who would redeem the world was to come from this people. This is the reason God was so patient with them. He wanted to preserve them for Himself. In 1 Cor. 10, we learn that the things that happened to them were "examples" unto us. In other words, their whole history was an "object lesson" to us, illustrating God's dealing with us today.

The key thought is discipline. Numbers is the fourth book of Moses. Someone has said that the order of the books is as follows:

In Genesis, we see humanity ruined.
In Exodus, humanity redeemed.
In Leviticus, humanity worshiping.
In Numbers, humanity serving.

This is the order the Law lays down. Only someone who is saved can serve and worship God. Remember, we are saved to serve. We are not saved by good works, but we are "created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph 2:10). The law can bring us up to the land of promise, but only our divine Joshua (Christ) can bring us in. Paul says that the law is the "schoolmaster" (KJV) to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). The law cannot save us, for we are saved "not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph 2:9).

Leviticus deals with the believer's worship.
Numbers deals with the believer's walk.
In Leviticus we see the believer's privileges.
It was God's plan that the children of Israel should go straight into the land He had promised them, the land of Canaan, but the people would not. God said that all those at Kadesh over twenty years old, except Joshua and Caleb, would have to die. A new generation arose during the forty years of wandering, but at the end the nation was about as strong in numbers as the day they left Egypt. (Read Numbers 26.)

Paul Van Gorder - A key phrase of the book, "all who were able to go forth to war," appears 14 times in chapter one. In typology, the theme of Numbers is service and walk. (Van Gorder on the Red Heifer in Numbers 19:1-22) God prescribed for Israel both a basis and method of cleansing. The sacrifice was to be a red heifer that was without blemish or spot and that had never borne a yoke. This speaks of the spotless character of Christ, who never came under the yoke of the curse for sin. That heifer was slain outside the camp. So also our Lord, though holy, was treated as unclean. By this He became the substitute for the unclean. The entire sacrifice had to be consumed. Christ offered Himself-- every part-- unto God. Cedar and hyssop and scarlet were cast into the midst of the burning sacrifice. The ashes from the sacrifice were gathered up and laid in a clean place-- set apart for those that were defiled. Likewise, our Lord went through the agony and sacrifice of Calvary, and His body was laid in a clean, new tomb. But He did not remain there. He arose from the grave, and "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb 7:25). The Israelites were told, "He who toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days" (Nu 19:11). Just a touch was enough to make a person unclean. Death is the work of sin, and the entire race has come under sin's penalty. "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Ro 3:10). The believer in Jesus, after he has received by faith the sacrifice of Christ, comes in contact with the defilement of the flesh and of the world. Just a touch of sin is enough to break fellowship with God and render a person unclean. For such an unclean person in Israel, the priest sprinkled the ashes of the burnt heifer in running water and put them into a container. Then a clean person would dip hyssop in the water and sprinkle it upon the tent, the utensils, and the person that had become unclean. This speaks of cleansing from the defilement of sin. The slaying of the sacrifice and the keeping of the ashes were not enough. For the sacrifice to be effective, it had to be appropriated through the ceremony of the running water.

How vividly this speaks of the water of the Word! The Lord Jesus said, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). Just as it was running water for Israel, so it is by the moving of the Spirit of God through the Word that we are convicted of our sin and also cleansed from it. Paul said that Christ gave Himself for the church "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph 5:26). The apostle John wrote, "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:7-9). (OT Reflections of Christ - Numbers)
Do you wonder if you are following the Lord’s leading to the place where He wants you to be? The Israelites cried out to God, and He heard them, raising up Moses to deliver them out of slavery in the land of Egypt and lead them towards the Promised Land. Because of their sin, however, they suffered the consequences and wandered in the wilderness for nearly forty years. What can you learn from the children of Israel so that you won’t make the same mistakes?
GEORGE BUSH
Commentary on the Book of Numbers
Chapter by chapter exegesis.
1858

- Numbers 1
- Numbers 2
- Numbers 3
- Numbers 4
- Numbers 5
- Numbers 6
- Numbers 7
- Numbers 8
- Numbers 9
- Numbers 10
- Numbers 11
- Numbers 12
- Numbers 13
- Numbers 14
- Numbers 15
- Numbers 16
- Numbers 17
- Numbers 18
- Numbers 19
- Numbers 20
- Numbers 21
- Numbers 22
- Numbers 23
- Numbers 24
- Numbers 25
- Numbers 26
- Numbers 27
- Numbers 28
- Numbers 29
- Numbers 30
- Numbers 31
- Numbers 32
- Numbers 33
- Numbers 34
- Numbers 35
- Numbers 36
BIBLICAL ART
Book of Numbers

- Numbers 13:1-14:45 Twelve Spies
- Numbers Images - 50 images from Blue Letter Bible
- Clipart Images - 1

JOHN CALVIN
Commentary on the Book of Numbers
No verse by verse comments on this book

- Numbers 9:1 9:6
- Numbers 15:20 15:38 15:41

RICH CATHERS
Notes on Numbers

- Numbers 1-4
- Numbers 5-6
- Numbers 7-8
- Numbers 9
- Numbers 10-11
- Numbers 12-13
- Numbers 14
- Numbers 15
- Numbers 16-17
- Numbers 17-18
- Numbers 18:20-32
- Numbers 19-20
- Numbers 20-21
- Numbers 22-24
- Numbers 25
- Numbers 26-27
- Numbers 28
- Numbers 29
- Numbers 30-31:18
- Numbers 31:19-32:42
- Numbers 32:6-33:56
ADAM CLARKE
Commentary on the Book of Numbers
(1760-1832)

See caveat regarding his interpretative approach
Note: The commentary below does not include the well done introductory comments by Dr Constable which can be retrieved by clicking here for his Pdf of Numbers.

- Numbers 1
- Numbers 2
- Numbers 3
- Numbers 4
- Numbers 5
- Numbers 6
- Numbers 7
- Numbers 8
- Numbers 9
- Numbers 10
- Numbers 11
- Numbers 12
- Numbers 13
- Numbers 1:1-4, Introduction and Outline
- Numbers 1:1-46, Numbered
- Numbers 2, Arranged
- Numbers 3:1-51, Priests, Duties, Firstborn
- Numbers 4:1-49, Priests, Duties, Firstborn (2)
- Numbers 5:1-10, Defiled
- Numbers 5:11-31, The Adultery Test
- Numbers 6:1-21, The Nazarites
- Numbers 6:22-27, The Total Blessing
- Numbers 6:22-27 Good Words - William E. Dempsey
- Numbers 6:22-27 The Great Blessing of God's Name Mark Ross
- Numbers 7:1-89, Offerings of the Leaders
- Numbers 8:1-26, Lamps, Levites, and Retirement
- Numbers 8:9-14, Passover
- Numbers 9:15 -10:10, Cloud and Trumpets
- Numbers 10:11-36, Leaving Sinai
- Numbers 11:1-15, Grumbling
- Numbers 11:16-30, Elders and Quail
- Numbers 11:31-35, The Plague
- Numbers 12:1-16, Murmuring in the House
- Numbers 13:1-33, Spies in the Land
- Numbers 14:1-45, Rebellion and Rebutte
- Numbers 15:1-41, The Laws of the Land
- Numbers 16:1-50, Korah's Rebellion
- Numbers 17:1-13, Aaron's Rod Blossoming
- Numbers 18:1-32, Levites’ Duties and Priestly Portion
- Numbers 19:1-22, The Red Heifer
- Numbers 20:1-29, Just Another Day in the Wilderness
- Numbers 20:1-13 More Than a Rock - Billy Dempsey
- Numbers 21:1-9, Snakebit
- Numbers 21:10-35, The Wars of the Lord
- Numbers 22:1-21, Conspiracy to Curse
- Numbers 22:22-40, Balaam's Ass
- Numbers 22:41-23:26, Balaam's Prophecy
- Numbers 23:27 - 24:25, Balaam's Prophecy (2)
- Numbers 25:1-18, Zeal of Phinehas
- Numbers 27:1-14, With God in the Wilderness (37): Inheritance Laws
- Numbers 27:12-23, Succession Plan
Numbers 26
Numbers 27
Numbers 28
Numbers 29
Numbers 30
Numbers 31
Numbers 32
Numbers 33
Numbers 34
Numbers 35
Numbers 36

ALFRED EDERSHEIM
Old Testament History
Book of Numbers

- Numbers 1-4; 10:1-11 - Analysis Of The Book Of Numbers - The Numbering Of Israel - And That Of The Levites - Arrangement Of The Camp, And Its Symbolical Import - The March
- Numbers 7-9 The Offerings Of The Princes - The Setting Apart Of The Levites - Second Observance Of The Passover
- Numbers 10:29-11 Departure From Sinai - March Into The Wilderness Of Paran - At Taberah And Kibroth-Hattaavah
- Numbers 12-14 -Murmuring Of Miriam And Aaron - The Spies Sent To Canaan - Their "Evil Report" - Rebellion Of The People, And Judgment Pronounced Upon Them - The Defeat Of Israel - "Unto Hormah"
- Numbers 33:19-37; 16, 17; Deuteronomy 1:46-11:15 - The Thirty-Eight Years In The Wilderness - The Sabbath-Breaker - The Gainsaying Of Korah And Of His Associates - Murmuring Of The People; The Plague, & How It Was Stayed - Aaron's Rod Budding, Blossoming, And Bearing Fruit
- Numbers 20; 21:1-3 - The Second Gathering Of Israel In Kadesh - The Sin Of Moses And Aaron - Embassy To Edom - Death Of Aaron -Retreat Of Israel From The Borders Of Edom -Attack By The Canaanitish King Of Arad
- Numbers 21:3-35; 33:35-49; Deuteronomy 2, 3 - Journey Of Children Of Israel In "Compassing" Land Of Edom - The "Fiery Serpents" And The "Braden Serpent" - Israel Enters The Land Of The Amorites - Victories Over Sihon And Og, - The Kings Of The Amorites And Of Bashan - Israel Camps In "Lowlands Of Moab" Close By The Jordan
- Numbers 22 - Israel About To Take Possession Of The Land Of Promise - Decisive Contest Showing The Real Character Of Heathenism - Character And History Of Balaam
- Numbers 22:36-31:1-20 - The "Prophecies" Of Balaam - The End Of Balaam - Parallel Between Balaam And Judas
- Numbers 26-36 - The Second Census Of Israel - The "Daughters Of Zelahpehad" - Appointment Of Moses' Successor - Sacrificial Ordinances - The War Against Midian -
Allocation Of Territory East Of The Jordan - Levitical And Cities Of Refuge

Numbers 27:15-23 Death And Burial Of Moses. Deut 3:23-29; Deut 34

CHARLES J ELICOTT
Commentary on the Book of Numbers
For English Readers

- Introduction
- Numbers 1
- Numbers 2
- Numbers 3
- Numbers 4
- Numbers 5
- Numbers 6
- Numbers 7
- Numbers 8
- Numbers 9
- Numbers 10
- Numbers 11
- Numbers 12
- Numbers 13
- Numbers 14
- Numbers 15
- Numbers 16
- Numbers 17
- Numbers 18
- Numbers 19
- Numbers 20
- Numbers 21
- Numbers 22
- Numbers 23
- Numbers 24
- Numbers 25
- Numbers 26
- Numbers 27
- Numbers 28
- Numbers 29
- Numbers 30
- Numbers 31
- Numbers 32
- Numbers 33
- Numbers 34
- Numbers 35
OUTLINE OF
THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

Book One:
The End of the First Generation
in the Wilderness (Numbers 1:1-25:18)

I. Faithfulness of Israel at Sinai (Numbers 1:1-10:10)

1. Sinai Cycle A: Census and Consecration of the Tribes of Israel
   (Numbers 1:1-6:27)
   (1) Historical Setting: Prologue (Numbers 1:1)
   (2) Military Conscription of the Twelve Tribes of Israel (Numbers 1:2-46)
      Census Instructions (Numbers 1:2-4)
      Census Assistants Enlisted (Numbers 1:5-16)
      Census Directed by Moses (Numbers 1:17-19)
      Census Results by Tribal Households (Numbers 1:20-43)
      Census Summary and Total (Numbers 1:44-46)
      Responsibilities of Uncounted Levites (Numbers 1:47-53)
      Census Conclusion: Faithful Obedience (Numbers 1:54)
   (3) Holy Arrangement of the Israelite Camps (Numbers 2:1-34)
      Introduction (Numbers 2:1-2)
      East Side, South Side West Side, North Side Encampments (Numbers 2:3-31)
      Conclusion: Faithful Obedience (Numbers 2:32-34)
   (4) Responsibilities and Census of the Levite Clans (Numbers 3:1-4:49)
      Introduction: Genealogy of Aaron and Moses (Numbers 3:1-4)
      Levite Consecration to Service (Numbers 3:5-10)
      Levite Replacement of the Firstborn (Numbers 3:11-13)
      Genealogical Delineation of Levite Clans (Numbers 3:14-20)
Census and Responsibilities of the Levite Clans (Numbers 3:21–39)

Dedication of the Levites in Firstborn Redemption (Numbers 3:40–51)

Further Responsibilities and Census of Levites for Service (Numbers 4:1–49)

Kohathite Service Detailed (Numbers 4:1–20)

Gershonite Service Detailed (Numbers 4:21–28)

Merarite Service Detailed (Numbers 4:29–33)

Summary Census of Levites (Numbers 4:34–49)

(5) Purification Laws for the Faithful Community (Numbers 5:1–31)

Cultic Isolation of Various Disease Carriers (Numbers 5:1–4)

Restitution for Wrongs Done (Numbers 5:5–10)

The Case of a Suspected Adulterous Wife (Numbers 5:11–31)

(6) The Sacred Nazirite Vow (Numbers 6:1–21)

Introduction (Numbers 6:1–2)

Prohibitions (Numbers 6:3–8)

Purification from Corpse Defilement (Numbers 6:9–12)

Completion Rituals of the Nazirite Vow (Numbers 6:13–20)

Summary (Numbers 6:21)

(7) The Priestly Blessing (Numbers 6:22–27)

2. Sinai Cycle B: Tabernacle and Celebration (Numbers 7:1–10:10)

(1) Offerings of the Leaders of the Israelite Tribes (Numbers 7:1–89)

Historical Setting and Introduction (Numbers 7:1–11)

Tribal Gifts Delineated (Numbers 7:12–83)

Summary of Offerings Presented (Numbers 7:84–88)

Yahweh Speaks with Moses in the Tabernacle (Numbers 7:89)

(2) Menorah Lamp Arrangement (Numbers 8:1–4)

(3) Installation of the Levites (Numbers 8:5–26)
II. The Rebellious Generation in the Wilderness (Numbers 10:11–25:18)

1. Rebellion Cycle A: From Sinai to Zin—Decline and Fall of the First Generation (Numbers 10:11-15:41)

(1) Historical Reference: From Mount Sinai to the Paran Desert (Numbers 10:11-13)

(2) The Departure from Sinai (Numbers 10:14-36)
   - The Israelite Tribes Depart in Orderly Array (Numbers 10:14-28)
   - Hobab: Departure or Guidance in the Wilderness? (Numbers 10:29-32)
   - First Stage of the Journey (Numbers 10:33-36)

(3) First Rebellion: General Murmuring (Numbers 11:1-3)

(4) Second Rebellion: Complaint about Food (Numbers 11:4-35)
   - The Rabble’s Complaint (Numbers 11:4-6)
   - Yahweh’s Provision of Manna (Numbers 11:7-9)
   - Moses’ Complaint about the People (Numbers 11:10-15)
   - Yahweh Responds: Assemble Seventy Elders (Numbers 11:16-17)
   - Preparation for Provision of Meat: Purification and
Confession (Numbers 11:18–20)

Moses Expresses Disbelief to Yahweh (Numbers 11:21–22)

Yahweh Responds to Moses’ Disbelief (Numbers 11:23)

Preparation for Blessing: Elders Assembled (Numbers 11:24)

Yahweh Sends Spirit upon the Seventy Elders (Numbers 11:25–27)

Moses Responds to Joshua’s Complaint (Numbers 11:28–30)

Yahweh’s Fresh Provision of Meat (Numbers 11:31–32)

Plague upon the People: With Meat in their Mouths (Numbers 11:33–34)

Second Stage of the Journey: Kibroth Hattaavah to Hazeroth (Numbers 11:35)

(5) Third Rebellion: Challenge to Moses’ Authority (Numbers 12:1–16)

Miriam and Aaron’s Challenge of Moses (Numbers 12:1–3)

God Speaks to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam (Numbers 12:4–8)

The Judgment against Miriam (Numbers 12:9–13)

God’s Reply to Moses, Miriam, and Aaron (Numbers 12:14–15)

Third Stage of the Journey (Numbers 12:16)

(6) Fourth Rebellion: Rejection of the Promised Land (Numbers 13:1–14:45)

Instructions from Yahweh to Explore the Promised Land (Numbers 13:1–3)

Tribal Scouts Enlisted (Numbers 13:4–16)

Moses Instructs the Tribal Scouts (Numbers 13:17–20)

Scouts Explore the Land (Numbers 13:21–25)

Report of the Scouts (Numbers 13:26–33)

Congregational Response to the Report (Numbers 14:1–4)

Leadership Response to the People (Numbers 14:5–10)
God Intervenes: Glory of Lord Appears (Numbers 14:10b–12)

Moses Intercedes with Yahweh for the People (Numbers 14:13–19)

Yahweh Responds to Moses’ Prayer (Numbers 14:20–23)

Caleb My Servant Will Live (Numbers 14:24–25)

Yahweh Speech: The Unfaithful Community Will Die in the Wilderness (Numbers 14:26–35)

Judgment against the Leaders: The Ten versus Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:36–38)

Conclusion: Moses Reports Judgment—Israel Mourns (Numbers 14:39–45)

(7) Offerings from the Land of Promise: Covenant Hope (Numbers 15:1–41)

Offerings from the Land (Numbers 15:1–16)

Offerings of the Firstfruits (Numbers 15:17–21)

Offerings for Inadvertent versus Intentional Sins (Numbers 15:22–36)

Covenant Epilogue: Garment Tassels and Growing Faith (Numbers 15:37–41)

2. Rebellion Cycle B: Korah and Company Challenge Moses (Numbers 16:1–19:22)

(1) Rebellion of Korah and the Reubenites (Numbers 16:1–50)

Korah Instigates Rebellion versus Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:1–3)

Moses’ Initial Response: Yahweh Will Demonstrate (Numbers 16:4–7)

Moses’ Confrontation with Rebellious Leaders (Numbers 16:8–15)

Moses’ Further Instructions to Korah (Numbers 16:16–19)

Yahweh’s Judgment and Moses’ Appeal (Numbers 16:20–22)

Yahweh’s Response: Judgment Is Imminent (Numbers 16:23–30)
Yahweh’s Judgment (Numbers 16:31–35)

Yahweh’s Instruction to the Priests (Numbers 16:36–40[Hb. 17:1-5])

People’s Response: Grumbling (Numbers 16:41–43[Hb. 17:6-8])

Yahweh Dispenses Judgment (Numbers 16:44–50[Hb. 17:9-15])

(2) Aaron’s Budding of Staff: Primacy of the Aaronic Priesthood Reconfirmed (Numbers 17:1-13 [Hb. 17:16-28])

Requirements: Instructions and Commands (Numbers 17:1-5 [Hb. 17:16-20])

Ready Compliance of the People and Moses (Numbers 17:6-7 [Hb. 17:21-22])

Results of the Test (Numbers 17:8-9[Hb. 17:23-24])

Renewed Instructions (Numbers 17:10-11[Hb. 17:25-26])

Rhetorical Response of the Israelites (Numbers 17:12-13 [Hb. 17:27-28])


Priests and Levites as Guardians of the Sanctuary (Numbers 18:1-7)

Provisions of Tribute for the Priests (Numbers 18:8-19)

Provisions for the Levites (Numbers 18:20-24)

Tithes and Offerings of the Levites (Numbers 18:25-32)

(4) Red Heifer Ashes and the Waters of Purification (Numbers 19:1-22)

Introduction: Divine Instruction and First Statute (Numbers 19:1-2a)

Preparation of the Ashes of the Red Heifer (Numbers 19:2b-10)

General Rule for Applying Red Heifer Ashes (Numbers 19:11-13)

Second Statute: Applying the Waters of Purification for Death Impurity (Numbers 19:14-22)

(1) From Kadesh of Zin to Mount Hor: The End of an Era (Numbers 20:1–29)

   Historical Setting: Kadesh of Zin and the Death of Miriam (Numbers 20:1)
   Moses’ Rebellion at Meribah-Kadesh (Numbers 20:2–13)
   Edom Denies Passage to the Israelites (Numbers 20:14–21)
   The Death and Burial of Aaron (Numbers 20:22–29)

(2) Victory over the Canaanites of Arad Hormah (Numbers 21:1–3)

(3) Rebellion and Judgment (Numbers 21:4–9)

(4) Journey through Moab (Numbers 21:10–20)

(5) Victory over the Amorites of Transjordan (Numbers 21:21–35)
   Victory over Sihon of Heshbon (Numbers 21:21–31)
   Victory over Og of Bashan (Numbers 21:32–35)


   Literary Analysis of Numbers 22–25
   Introduction to the Balaam Oracles (Numbers 22:1–24:25)
   Geographical Setting: Arabah of Moab along the Jordan across from Jericho (Numbers 22:1)

   **Cycle I:** First Messengers Sent to Balaam (Numbers 22:2–14)
   Balak Sees—Moses Fears the Numerous Israelites (Numbers 22:2–4)
   First Messengers Sent (Numbers 22:5a)
   The Message: Curse the Mighty Israel (Numbers 22:5b–6)
   Elders of Moab and Elders of Midian Journey to Pethor to Meet Balaam (Numbers 22:7)
   Balaam’s Response (Numbers 22:8)
   God’s Encounter with Balaam (Numbers 22:9–12)
   Balaam’s Response of Refusal (Numbers 22:13)
   Messengers Return Home to Moab (Numbers 22:14)

   **Cycle II:** Second Set of Messengers Sent to Balaam
Messengers Again Sent to Balaam (Numbers 22:15-17)

Balaam's Response to Balak's New Messengers (Numbers 22:18-19)

God's Second Encounter with Balaam (Numbers 22:20)

Balaam Departs with Messengers (Numbers 22:21)

**Cycle III**: God's Messenger Sent to Balaam (Numbers 22:22-38)

Introduction: God's Anger with Balaam (Numbers 22:22a)

The Angel of Yahweh Appears (Numbers 22:22b)

The Donkey Responds (Numbers 22:23)

The Angel of Yahweh Appears Again (Numbers 22:24)

Donkey Responds Again (Numbers 22:25)

The Angel of Yahweh Appears the Third Time (Numbers 22:26)

Donkey Responds the Third Time (Numbers 22:27)

God's Third Encounter with Balaam (Numbers 22:28-35)

Balak Goes out to Meet Balaam (Numbers 22:36-38)

Preparation for the First Oracular Event (Numbers 22:39-40)

**Balaam's First Oracle** (Numbers 22:41-23:10)

Balak Leads Balaam to Bamoth Baal (Numbers 22:41)

Balaam Instructs Balak to Prepare Sacrifices (Numbers 23:1)

Balak Obeys Balaam (Numbers 23:2)

Balaam to Balak: Stand Beside Your Burnt Offering (Numbers 23:3)

God Manifested Himself to Balaam (Numbers 23:4-5)

Balaam Returns to Balak (Numbers 23:6)

Balaam Obeys Yahweh: Speaks the First Oracle (Numbers 23:7-10)

Balak's Response to Balaam and the Rejoinder (Numbers 23:11-12)
Balaam's Second Oracle (Numbers 23:13–26)
Balak Sacrifices Animals on Seven Altars (Numbers 23:14b)
Balaam to Balak: Stand Beside Your Burnt Offering (Numbers 23:15)
God Manifested Himself to Balaam (Numbers 23:16)
Balaam Returns to Balak (Numbers 23:17)
Balaam Obeys Yahweh: Speaks the Second Oracle (Numbers 23:18–24)
Balak’s Second Response to Balaam and the Rejoinder (Numbers 23:25–26)

Balaam’s Third Oracle (Numbers 23:27–24:14)
Balak Leads Balaam to Bamoth Baal (Numbers 23:27–28)
Balaam Instructs Balak to Prepare Sacrifices (Numbers 23:29)
Balak Obeys Balaam (Numbers 23:30)
God Manifested Himself to Balaam (Numbers 24:1–2)
Balak’s Angry Response (Numbers 24:10–11)
Balaam’s Retort (Numbers 24:12–14)

Balaam’s Fourth Oracle (Numbers 24:15–19)

Balaam’s Final Three Oracles (Numbers 24:20–24)

Balaam’s Fifth Oracle: Against the Amalekites (Numbers 24:20)

Balaam’s Sixth Oracle: Against the Kenites (Numbers 24:21–22)

Balaam’s Seventh Oracle: Against Assyria (Numbers 24:23–24)

Balaam Departs Homeward (Numbers 24:25)


Setting of Immorality (Numbers 25:1–3)
Moses Receives Instruction from Yahweh (Numbers 25:4)
Moses Instructs the Leaders of Israel (Numbers 25:5)
III. Preparation of the New Generation of Israel (Numbers 26:1-30:16)

1. The Second Census in the Plains of Moab (Numbers 26:1-65)
   (1) Census Instructions (Numbers 26:1-4)
   (2) Reuben’s descendants (Numbers 26:5-11)
   (3) Simeon’s Descendants (Numbers 26:12-14)
   (4) Gad’s Descendants (Numbers 26:15-18)
   (5) Judah’s Descendants (Numbers 26:19-22)
   (6) Issachar’s Descendants (Numbers 26:23-25)
   (7) Zebulun’s Descendants (Numbers 26:26-27)
   (8) Sons of Joseph: Manasseh’s Descendants (Numbers 26:28-34)
   (9) Sons of Joseph: Ephraim’s Descendants (Numbers 26:35-37)
   (10) Benjamin’s Descendants (Numbers 26:38-41)
   (11) Dan’s Descendants (Numbers 26:42-43)
   (12) Asher’s Descendants (Numbers 26:44-47)
   (13) Naphtali’s Descendants (Numbers 26:48-50)
   (14) Total Population of the Second Generation (Numbers 26:51)
   (15) Instructions for Division of the Land (Numbers 26:52-56)
   (16) Levi’s Descendants (Numbers 26:57-62)
   (17) Conclusion of the Second Census (Numbers 26:63-65)

2. Land Inheritance Laws: The Case of Zelophehad’s Daughters (Numbers 27:1-11)
   (1) The Case of Zelophehad’s Daughters (Numbers 27:1-5)
IV. Advent Cycle B: Preparation for War and Entry into the Promised Land (Numbers 31:1-36:13)

3. Joshua Heir to Moses (Numbers 27:12-23)

(1) Moses’ Sin Recapitulated (Numbers 27:12-14)
(2) Moses’ Entreaty for a New Leader (Numbers 27:15-17)
(3) Moses’ Instruction from the Lord (Numbers 27:18-21)
(4) Moses Commissions Joshua (Numbers 27:22-23)

4. The Appointed Times and Offerings (Numbers 28:1-29:40)

(1) Introduction (Numbers 28:1-2)
(2) Daily Offerings (Numbers 28:3-8)
(3) Weekly (Sabbath) Offerings (Numbers 28:9-10)
(4) Monthly (Rosh Chodesh) Offerings (Numbers 28:11-15)
(5) Passover (Pesach) and Unleavened Bread Offerings (Numbers 28:16-25)
(6) Feast of Weeks (Shavuoth / Pentecost) Offerings (Numbers 28:26-31)
(7) Feast of the Blowing Trumpets Offerings (Numbers 29:1-6)
(8) Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) Offerings (Numbers 29:7-11)
(9) Feast of Booths (Sukkoth) Offerings (Numbers 29:16-38)
(10) Summary (Numbers 29:39-40)

5. Women’s Vows (Numbers 30:1-16)

(1) Introduction: General Principle for Vows (Numbers 30:1-2)
(2) Vows of Unmarried Women (Numbers 30:3-5)
(3) Vows of Newly Married Women (Numbers 30:6-8)
(4) Vows of Widowed or Divorced Women (Numbers 30:9)
(5) Vows of Married Women (Numbers 30:10-15)
(6) Summary (Numbers 30:16)

IV. Advent Cycle B: Preparation for War and Entry into the Promised Land (Numbers 31:1-36:13)

Introduction to the Second Advent Cycle

1. The Midianite Campaign (Numbers 31:1-54)

Critical Issues in Numbers 31

(1) Israelite Armies Battle the Midianites (Numbers 31:1-12)
(2) Preserving the Sanctity of the Camp (Numbers 31:13-24)
(3) Division of the War Booty among the Israelites (Numbers 31:25–54)

2. **Settlement of the Transjordan Tribes (Numbers 32:1-42)**

(1) Reubenite and Gadite Request (Numbers 32:1-5)

(2) Moses’ Response (Numbers 32:6-15)

(3) Promise of Support (Numbers 32:16-19)

(4) Moses’ Response to the Promise (Numbers 32:20-24)

(5) Gad and Reuben Ratify the Agreement (Numbers 32:25-27)

(6) Moses Informs Eleazar and Joshua of the Decision (Numbers 32:28-30)

(7) Gad and Reubenite Reiterate the Promise (Numbers 32:31-32)

(8) Moses Grants Transjordan Tribal Territory (Numbers 32:33-42)

3. **The Israelite Victory March: From Ramses to the Plains of Moab (Numbers 33:1-49)**

4. **Instructions for the Conquest of the Land (Numbers 33:50-56)**

5. **Preparation for Allocation of the Promised Land (Numbers 34:1-29)**

(1) Boundaries of the Promised Land Delineated (Numbers 34:1-15)

(2) Leaders Appointed to Divide the Promised Land (Numbers 34:16-29)

6. **Levitical Cities and the Cities of Refuge (Numbers 35:1-34)**

(1) The Levitical Cities (Numbers 35:1-8)

(2) Cities of Refuge (Numbers 35:9-34)


Legal Precedent: Historical Background of the Request by Zelophehad’s Daughters (Numbers 36:1-2)

The Case Presented by the Gileadite Clans (Numbers 36:3-4)

Moses Presents the Case Adjudication at Yahweh’s Command (Numbers 36:5-12)

8. **Conclusion to the Case and the Book of Numbers (Numbers 36:13)**
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Numbers 1
Numbers 2
Numbers 3
Numbers 4
Numbers 5
Numbers 6
Numbers 7
Numbers 8
Numbers 9
Numbers 10
Numbers 11
Numbers 12
Numbers 13
Numbers 14
Numbers 15
Numbers 16
Numbers 17
Numbers 18
Numbers 19
Numbers 20
Numbers 21
Numbers 22
Numbers 23
Numbers 25
Numbers 26
Numbers 27
Numbers 28
Numbers 30
Numbers 31
Numbers 32
Numbers 33
Numbers 35
Numbers 36

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Numbers 1
Numbers 2
Numbers 3
Numbers 4
Numbers 5
Numbers 6
Numbers 7
Numbers 8
Numbers 9
Numbers 10
Numbers 11
Numbers 12
Numbers 13
Numbers 14
Numbers 15
Numbers 16
Numbers 17
Numbers 18
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- Numbers 1
- Numbers 2
- Numbers 3
- Numbers 4
- Numbers 5
- Numbers 6
- Numbers 7
- Numbers 8
- Numbers 9
- Numbers 10
- Numbers 11
- Numbers 12
- Numbers 13
- Numbers 14
- Numbers 15
- Numbers 16
- Numbers 17
- Numbers 18
- Numbers 19
- Numbers 20
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- Numbers 13:23 Grapes of Eshcol
- Numbers 17:8 The Budded Rod
- Numbers 19:2 The Red Heifer
- Numbers 21:8-9 The Brazen Serpent
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- Numbers 3:45
- Numbers 4:19
- Numbers 5:3
- Numbers 6:12
- Numbers 7:89
- Numbers 8:11, 13, 15, 21
- Numbers 9:19
- Numbers 10:32
- Numbers 11:29
- Numbers 12:7-8
- Numbers 13:33
- Numbers 14:13
- Numbers 15:38
- Numbers 16:5
- Numbers 17:5
- Numbers 18:20
- Numbers 19:17
- Numbers 20:8, 11
- Numbers 21:17
- Numbers 22:22
- Numbers 23:20
- Numbers 24:2
- Numbers 25:3
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- M. M. Kalish, Bible Studies: The Prophecies of Balaam (Numbers XXII- XXIV). London:


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- Numbers 13:26-14:12 Defining Moments - Driven by Fear or Trusting in God's Promises - audio/visual only

WOODROW KROLL

- Numbers 13:30-31 Ten to Two

STREAMS IN DESERT

- Numbers 13:33 There we saw the giants

TOM NELSON

- Ex. 32 & Num. 13, 16, 21 The Story of Israel and the Law - From Sinai to the Wilderness Wanderings --audio only
- Numbers 14 and 21 Kadesh and Hormah “If God is With Us...?”- audio only

GARY INRIG

- Numbers 14 The Lost Generation - Mp3
S LEWIS JOHNSON

- Numbers 14:1-10 Israel at Kadesh-Barnea, part II
- Numbers 14:11-45 Israel at Kadesh-Barnea, part III

BIBLE GATEWAY DEVOTIONALS

- Numbers 14:44 Moving in Presumption - TGIF

THEODORE EPP

- Numbers 14:26-38 God's Judgment Falls

ALAN CARR

- Numbers 14:6-9 The Breakfast Of Champions
- Numbers 15:38-41 The Hem Of His Garment

DAVID LEGGE

- Numbers 16: Which Side Of The Line Are You Standing On?

TOM NELSON

- Numbers 16-17 An Old Testament Easter -- Audio only

S LEWIS JOHNSON

- Numbers 16:1-50 The Gainsaying of Korah
- Numbers 17:1-13 Aaron's Rod that Budded

HENRY LAW

- Numbers 17 The Budded Rod

F B MEYER

- Numbers 18:20 The Psalm of Inheritance

HENRY LAW

- Numbers 19:2 The Red Heifer

ALFRED EDERSHEIM

- Numbers 19 The Red Heifer - click and search pdf for 28 occurrences of red heifer such
Alternative site

The Red Heifer 1. The purification from the defilement of death by the ashes of the red heifer (Num 19). In the worship of the Old Testament, where everything was symbolical, that is, where spiritual realities were conveyed through outwards signs, every physical defilement would point to, and carry with it, as it were, a spiritual counterpart. But especially was this the case with reference to birth and death, which were so closely connected with sin and the second death, with redemption and the second birth. Hence, all connected with the origin of life and with death, implied defilement, and required Levitical purification. But here there was considerable difference. Passing over the minor defilements attaching to what is connected with the origin of life, the woman who had given birth to a child was Levitically unclean for forty or for eighty days, according as she had become the mother of a son or a daughter (Lev 12). After that she was to offer for her purification a lamb for a burnt-, and a turtle-dove, or young pigeon, for a sin-offering; in case of poverty, altogether only two turtle-doves or two young pigeons. We remember that the mother of Jesus availed herself of that provision for the poor, when at the same time she presented in the Temple the Royal Babe, her firstborn son (Luke 2:22).

H. L. ROSSIER

- Numbers 19 The Red Heifer

ROBERT MORGAN

- Exodus 17, Numbers 20 Streams in the Desert

DON ROBINSON

- Numbers 20:1-13, 23-29 Moses' Sin

S LEWIS JOHNSON

- Numbers 20-22:1 Meribah, Aaron's Death and the Brazen Serpent
  - Numbers 20:1-40 The Dunce and the Donkey (Balaam)

DALE RALPH DAVIS

- Numbers 20:1-29 From Tragedy to Triumph
- Numbers 22:1-25:18
- Numbers 26:1-36 A Future and a Hope

THEODORE EPP

- Numbers 20:1-13a, 22-29 Christ Our Rock
**BRUCE GOETTSCHE**

- Numbers 20:1-3: Almost, But Not Quite

**DON ROBINSON**

- Numbers 21:4 Dangers of Discouragement
- Numbers 21:4 Key Words Of The Christian Life: Discouraged
- Numbers 21:4-9 The Brazen Serpent

**David Legge**

- Numbers 21: Look And Live!

**Bruce Goettsche**

- Numbers 21:4-9: Gratitude for the Snake

**Wil Pounds**

- Numbers 21:4-9, John 3:14-16: The Bronze Serpent
- Numbers: Book of Wanderings - Wandering in the wilderness of sin
- Deuteronomy 4:30 Commentary

**James Hastings**

- Numbers 21:8-9 Look and Live (22 pages)

**Henry Law**

- Numbers 21:8-9 The Brazen Serpent

**Thomas Watson**

Painting of an allegory of salvation - cp John 3:14-15 and Nu 21:7-9, but see how they turned this into an idol!!! See 2 Ki 18:4 = The bronze serpent was preserved for 730 years until Hezekiah (715–686BC) broke it in pieces because the people were worshipping it instead of the One to Whom it was supposed to point them!!! In contempt he gave it the name ‘Nehushtan’ (a play on the word nahas/nachash, = ‘serpent’), meaning a ‘trifling thing’, because it had become an object of worship. Before we are "too hard" on Israel we need to remember that Israel's rebellion in the OT is a picture of our old flesh nature, and thus this incredible story begs the question "Have I turned something good and glorious into an idol? Am I willing to pray Psalm 139:23, 24?" (Bruce Hurt, MD)
- **Numbers 21:6-9 Fiery Serpents**
  - **ALAN CARR**
  - **Numbers 21:1-9 The Case of the Vicious Vipers**
  - **WIL POUNDS**
  - **Numbers 21:9 The Bronze Serpent**
  - **THEODORE CUYLER**
  - **Numbers 21:16-18 The Song at the Well**
  - **BRUCE GOETTSCHE**
  - **Numbers 22-25: Prophet for Hire**
  - **TOM NELSON**
  - **Numbers 21:21-35 Taking War to the Hilt -- audio only**
  - **Numbers 22-31 An Odd Little War- The Lesson of “Danger Within” - audio**
  - **Numbers 22 – Joshua God’s Nation of Law- Saved By Grace**
  - **S LEWIS JOHNSON**
  - **Numbers 22:41-23:14 Balaam's Prophecies, part I: The Distinctiveness of Israel**
  - **Numbers 23:13-16 Balaam's Prophecies, part II: Israel's Immutable Covenantal Blessing**
  - **HORATIUS BONAR**
  - **Numbers 23:9 The Vision of the Rocks**
  - **JAMES HASTINGS**
  - **Numbers 23:10 The Death to Die (20 pages)**
  - **LEROY EIMS**
  - **Numbers 23:19 God's Faithfulness - Audio only**
  - **S LEWIS JOHNSON**
  - **Numbers 24:14-25 Balaam's Prophecies, part IV: Jacob's Awesome Star**
GREG HERRICK
- Numbers 24:15-19 A Star Will Come out of Jacob

HENRY LAW
- Numbers 24:17 Jacob's Star and Israel's Scepter

GREG HERRICK
- Numbers 24:15-19 A Star Will Come out of Jacob

S LEWIS JOHNSON
- Numbers 25:1-18; 31:3,16 Balaam's Last End

HENRY LAW
- Numbers 25:10-13 Phinehas

ALFRED EDERSHEIM
- Numbers 29:7-11 Day of Atonement - Recommended

WOODROW KROLL
- Numbers 30:2 As Good As Your Word

HORATIUS BONAR
- Numbers 31:8 The Doom of the Double Hearted

DAVID LEGGE
- Numbers 32:20-23: A Sinful Certainty

WOODROW KROLL
- Numbers 32:6-7 Discouraging by Default
- Numbers 32:11-12 Total Commitment

JAMES HASTINGS
- Numbers 32:23 Sin the Detective (22 pages)

HENRY LAW
See More Our Daily Bread Devotionals

- **Numbers 6:22-27 Benediction Blessing**
- **Numbers 6:22-27 Smile! - Our Daily Bread**
- **Numbers 8:23-26 Don't Just Retire!**
- **Numbers 9:15-23 Following The Master - Our Daily Bread**
- Numbers 9:15-23 To Work Or to Wait?
- **Numbers 11:1-9 Tired Of Manna?**
- **Numbers 11:1-10 Are You A Complainer?**
- **Numbers 11:4-17 Help for a Heavy Load**
- Numbers 11:6 Boring?
- Numbers 12:1 Jealousy or zeal?
- Numbers 12:1 The Friction of Jealousy
- Numbers 13:17-33 Only a Scarecrow
- **Numbers 13:25-14:9 Trouble Ahead**
- **Numbers 13:25-14:19 House-Hunting Ants - Our Daily Bread**
- **Numbers 14:18 Caricature God**
- **Numbers 14:26-35 So Near And Yet So Far**
- **Numbers 14:1-11 Thorns Or Roses?**
- Numbers 14:1-4, 11-23 Rearview Mirror
- **Numbers 15:37-41 The Color Of Blue**
- **Numbers 15:37-41 Look at the Tassels**
- Numbers 15:38 Holy Blue (Very convicting!)
- Numbers 16 Passing Judgment
- Numbers 20:1-13 Danger: Explosives
- **Numbers 20:1-13 Are You Listening?**
- **Numbers 20:12,24 A Bitter Attitude**
- **Numbers 22:10-34 Unstoppable**
- **Numbers 22:21-31 The Unseen World**
- **Numbers 27:12-23 Change Of Leaders**
- **Numbers 27:15-23 Going Out & Coming In**
- **Numbers 32:23 Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out**
- **Numbers 32:23 What's the Trouble?**
- **Numbers 32:23 Collision Course**

**PASTOR LIFE**

**Sermons**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Preacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why Has He Brought Us Into This Land?</td>
<td>Numbers 14:1-10</td>
<td>Bill Cannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Danger of Presumption</td>
<td>Numbers 15:30-31</td>
<td>Franklin L. Kirksey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouraging Pathways</td>
<td>Numbers 21:4</td>
<td>Alan Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greatest Work In The World</td>
<td>Numbers 21:4-9</td>
<td>J. Mike Minnix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cross in the Wilderness</td>
<td>Numbers 21:4-9</td>
<td>Johnny L. Sanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons From A Dog</td>
<td>Numbers 22</td>
<td>Alan Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Strangest Character in the Scripture</td>
<td>Numbers 22:1-25</td>
<td>Franklin L. Kirksey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jochebed - The Momma of Moses</td>
<td>Numbers 26:59</td>
<td>Ron Hale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ROBERT RAYBURN**

**Sermons**

**Book of Numbers**

**Preached in 2008-2009**

- Introduction to Numbers
- Numbers 1:1-54
- Numbers 2:1-34
- Numbers 3:1-4:49
- Numbers 5:1-10
- Numbers 5:11-31
- Numbers 6:1-21
- Numbers 6:22-27
- Numbers 7:1-89
- Numbers 8:1-26
- Numbers 9:1-14
- Numbers 9:15-10:36
- Numbers 11:1-35
- Numbers 12:1-16
- Numbers 13:1-33
- Numbers 14:1-45
- Numbers 15:1-41
- Numbers 16:1-50
RAYMOND SAXE
Sermons
Numbers

- Numbers 1:1-54 (pdf)
- Numbers 2:1-34 (pdf)
- Numbers 3:1-51 (pdf)
- Numbers 4:1-49 (pdf)
- Numbers 5:1-31 (pdf)
- Numbers 6:1-21 (pdf)
- Numbers 6:22-27 (pdf)
- Numbers 7:1-89 (pdf)
- Numbers 8:1-22 (pdf)
- Numbers 9:1-14 (pdf)
- Numbers 9:15-23 (pdf)
- Numbers 10:11-28 (pdf)
- Numbers 10:1-10 (pdf)
- Numbers 10:29-36 (pdf)
- Numbers 11:1-3 (pdf)
- Numbers 11:5-15 (pdf)
- Numbers 11:16-35 (pdf)
- Numbers 12:1-16 (pdf)
- Numbers 13-14 (pdf)
- Numbers 13:1-33 (pdf)
- Numbers 14:1-10 (pdf)
- Numbers 14:10-20 (pdf)
- Numbers 14:24 (pdf)
- Numbers 14:20-45 (pdf)
- Numbers 15:1-21 (pdf)
- Numbers 15:22-41 (pdf)
- Numbers 16:1-35 (pdf)
- Numbers 16:36-17:13 (pdf)
- Numbers 18:1-32 (pdf)
- Numbers 20:1-3 (pdf)
- Numbers 21:4-9 (pdf)
- Numbers 20:14-21:3 (pdf)
- Numbers 23-24 (pdf)
Numbers 5:29 The Jealousy Offering
Numbers 5:21 The Law of Nazarites
Numbers 6:23-27 God Will Bless His Own Ordinances
Numbers 9:21-23 The Journeys of the Israelites
Numbers 10:29 Moses' Initiation at Hobab
Numbers 10:35-36 Moses' Prayer at the Removal and Resting of the Ark
Numbers 11:10-13 Inordinate Desire Punished
Numbers 11:23 God's Word Sure
Numbers 11:27-29 Joshua's Envy Reproved
Numbers 12:8-9 Aaron and Miriam Reproved
Numbers 14:4-5 Apostasy Deprecated
Numbers 14:6-9 The People Murmuring at the Report of the Spies
Numbers 14:20-21 God's Answer to the Intercession of Moses
Numbers 14:24 Following the Lord Fully
Numbers 14:44 Presumption of the Rebellious Israelites
Numbers 15:30-31 The Danger of Presumptuous Sin
Numbers 15:32-36 The Sabbath Breaker Stoned
Numbers 15:37-41 The Use and Intent of Fringes on the Garments
Numbers 16:38 Korah's Rebellion
Numbers 16:48 Aaron's Intercession
Numbers 17:10 Aaron's Rod that Budded
Numbers 19:17-20 The Law of Purification
Numbers 20:12 Moses and Aaron Sentenced to Die in the Wilderness
Numbers 20:27-28 Death of Aaron
Numbers 21:4 The Israelites Discouraged by the Way
Numbers 21:8-9 The Brazen Serpent
Numbers 27:18-19 Balaam's Character
Numbers 22:31 Balaam Obstructed by the Angel
Numbers 23:7-10 Balaam's First Attempt to Curse Israel
Numbers 23:18-23 Balaam's Second Attempt to Curse Israel
Numbers 23:19 God Will Fulfill His Word
Numbers 24:5-8 Balaam's Third Attempt to Curse Israel
Numbers 24:15-17 Christ the Star Spoken of by Balaam
Numbers 25:10-13 Phinehas Rewarded for His Zeal
Numbers 26:63-65 Perishing of the Israelites in the Wilderness
Numbers 27:15-21 Appointment of Joshua to Succeed Moses
Numbers 28:3-10 The Morning and Evening Sacrifice
Numbers 31:48-50 Destruction of the Midianites
Numbers 32:6-7 Moses Reproves the Reubenites
Numbers 32:23 The Certainty that Sin Will Find Us Out!
Numbers 35:21-28 The Cities of Refuge
Introduction

Numbers 5

Numbers 6

Numbers 9

Numbers 10

Numbers 11

Numbers 12

Numbers 14

Numbers 15

Numbers 16

Numbers 17

Numbers 19

Numbers 20

Numbers 21

Numbers 22

Numbers 23

Numbers 24

Numbers 25

Numbers 26

Numbers 27

Numbers 28

Numbers 31

Numbers 32

Numbers 35

CHUCK SMITH
Sermon Notes
Book of Numbers
Calvary Chapel

- Numbers 6:2 The Vow of the Nazarite
- Numbers 6:22-26 The LORD Bless You
- Numbers 6:23-27 The LORD Bless You
- Numbers 6:23-27 Priestly Benediction
- Numbers 6:24 The LORD Bless You
- Numbers 11:4 The Mixed Multitude
- Numbers 11:4 The Mixed Multitude - 2
- Numbers 11:4 The Mixed Multitude - 3
- Numbers 11:4 The Mixed Multitude - 4
- Numbers 13-14 The Tragedy of Kadesh Barnea
- Numbers 13:26 Life Divided into Three Planes
- Numbers 13:26 The Tragedy of Kadesh Barnea 3
- Numbers 13:26-14:34 Legitimate and Illegitimate Wilderness Experience
- Numbers 14 Unbelief
- Numbers 14:22-23 Unbelief the Thief
- Numbers 15:1,2 God's Amazing Grace
- Numbers 21:5 The Brass Serpent (See how it became a "snare" to Israel - 2Ki 18:4)
- Numbers 21:5-9 The History of the Brazen Serpent
- Numbers 21:5-9 The Serpent of Brass
- Numbers 22-20,35 Going Beyond the Word
- Numbers 23:10 The Death of the Righteous
- Numbers 23:10 - The Death of the Righteous (Read the warning in part III.)
- Numbers 26:9 Famous for Infamy
- Numbers 26:29 The Twelve Tribes
- Numbers 27:12-14 God's Representative (very practical!)
- Numbers 32:5 Less Than Best (The Danger of Falling Short)
- Numbers 32:23 Your Sin Will Find You Out (in your face, conscience, life, death)
- Numbers 32:23 Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out
- Numbers 32:23 Discovered! (Three common errors about sin)
- Numbers 32:23 You Can Be Sure
- Numbers 33:50-56 A Clean Sweep
- Numbers 35:11-12 The Place of Refuge (in many ways a type of Christ)

Chuck Smith Audio Chapter by Chapter

- C2000 Series on Numbers 1-10
- C2000 Series on Numbers 11-20
- C2000 Series on Numbers 21-28
- C2000 Series on Numbers 29-36

Chuck Smith Commentary (same material as C2000 Series above)

- Numbers 1
- Numbers 2
- Numbers 3
- Numbers 4
- Numbers 5
- Numbers 6
- Numbers 7
- Numbers 8
- Numbers 9
- Numbers 10
- Numbers 11
- Numbers 12
- Numbers 13
- Numbers 14
- Numbers 15
- Numbers 16
- Numbers 17
- Numbers 18
- Numbers 19
- Numbers 20
- Numbers 21
- Numbers 22
- Numbers 23
- Numbers 24
- Numbers 25
- Numbers 26
- Numbers 27
- Numbers 28
- Numbers 29
- Numbers 30
- Numbers 31
C H SPURGEON
All of Spurgeon's Sermons
On the Book of Numbers

- Numbers 4:24-26 Lowly Service
- Numbers 4:49 The Numbered People
- Numbers 6:22-27 The Blessing of the High Priest
- Numbers 6:23-27, 2 Cor 13:14 Two Choice Benedictions
- Numbers 9:11, 12 Feeding on a Whole Christ
- Numbers 10:29 A Generous Proposal
- Numbers 10:35 The March
- Numbers 11:1 Against Murmuring - Sermon Notes
- Numbers 11:23 The Glorious Right Hand of the Lord
- Numbers 13:32, 14:6-7 The Spies
- Numbers 14:11 Mistrust of God Deplored and Denounced
- Numbers 14:24 Caleb - The Man for the Times
- Numbers 16:47-48 The High Priest Standing Between the Dead and the Living
- Numbers 19:2, 3 The Red Heifer
- Numbers 21:8 Man's Ruin and God's Remedy
- Numbers 21:9 Lifting Up the Brazen Serpent
- Numbers 21:16-18 A Song At the Well Head
- Numbers 23:10 The End of the Righteous Desired
- Numbers 23:21 The Best War Cry
- Numbers 24:17 The Star Our of Jacob
- Numbers 26:63-65 The Census of Israel
- Numbers 27:5 Women's Rights -- A Parable
- Numbers 32:23 The Great Sin of Doing Nothing
- Numbers 35:11 The Sinner's Refuge

C H SPURGEON
Devotionals on Numbers
Morning and Evening
Faith's Checkbook

- Numbers 2:31
ROBERT A WATSON
Commentary on Numbers

- Introduction
- Numbers 1:1-46 The Census and the Camp
- Numbers 2 The Camp
- Numbers 3:1-10 The Priesthood
- Numbers 3:11-13, 40-51 The Firstborn
- Numbers 3:14-39 Thru Nu 4 Levitical Service
- Numbers 5:14 Exclusion From the Camp
- Numbers 5:5-10 Atonement for Trespass
- Numbers 5:11-31 The Water of Jealously
- Numbers 6 Naziritism: The Blessing of Aaron
- Numbers 7 Sanctuary and Passover: The Offering of the Princes
- Numbers 8:4 The Candelabrum
- Numbers 9:1-14 The Passover
- Numbers 9:15-23 The Cloud and the March: The Guiding Cloud (Shekinah)
- Numbers 10:1-10 The Silver Trumpets
- Numbers 10:11-28 The Order of March
- Numbers 10:29-36 Hobab the Kenite
- Numbers 11 The Strain of the Desert Journey
- Numbers 12 The Jealousy of Miriam and Aaron
- Numbers 13, 14:1-10 The Spies and their Report
- Numbers 14 The Doom of the Unbelieving
- Numbers 15 Offerings: Sabbath-Keeping: Dress
- Numbers 16, 17 Korah, Dathan, and Abiram
- Numbers 18, 19 Tithes and Cleansings
- Numbers 20 Sorrow and Failure at Kadesh
- Numbers 21 The Last March and the First Campaign
- Numbers 22:1-19 Balaam Invoked
- Numbers 22:20-38 Balaam on the Way
- Numbers 22:39-24:9 Balaam's Parables
- Numbers 26, 27 A New Generation
- Numbers 28-30 Offerings and Vows
- Numbers 20 The Laws and the Vows
- Numbers 31: War and Settlement: The War with Midian
- Numbers 32 The Settlement
- Numbers 33, 34 The Way and the Lot
- Numbers 35, 36 The Cities of Refuge
- Index

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**TODAY IN THE WORD**

Devotionals on Numbers
Moody Bible Institute

- Numbers 1:1-19
- Numbers 1:44-54
- Numbers 3:1-13
- Numbers 3:38-51
- Numbers 5:1-4
- Numbers 6:1-21
- Numbers 6:22-27
- Numbers 7:1-17
- Numbers 7:89-8:26
- Numbers 9:1-14
- Numbers 9:15-23
- Numbers 10:1-36
- Numbers 11:1-35
- Numbers 11:1-17
- Numbers 12:1-16
- Numbers 13:1-33
- Numbers 13:1-3, 17-33
- Numbers 13:1-14:38
- Numbers 14:1-10
- Numbers 14:1-45
- Numbers 14:1-10
- Numbers 14:11-16, 26-38
- Numbers 14:39-45
- Numbers 15:1-41
- Numbers 16:1-50
- Numbers 18:1-32
- Numbers 18:20-24
- Numbers 19:20
DEVOTIONALS
ON THE BOOK OF NUMBERS
C H SPURGEON
Morning and Evening
Faith's Checkbook

Numbers 2:31

“They shall go hindmost with their standards.” — Numbers 2:31 (from Morning and Evening)

The camp of Dan brought up the rear when the armies of Israel were on the march. The Danites occupied the hindmost place, but what mattered the position, since they were as truly part of the host as were the foremost tribes; they followed the same fiery cloudy pillar, they ate of the same manna, drank of the same spiritual rock, and journeyed to the same inheritance. Come, my heart, cheer up, though last and least; it is thy privilege to be in the army, and to fare as they fare who lead the van. Some one must be hindmost in honour and esteem, some one must do menial work for Jesus, and why should not I? In a poor village, among an ignorant peasantry; or in a back street, among degraded sinners, I will work on, and “go hindmost with my standard.”

The Danites occupied a very useful place. Stragglers have to be picked up upon the march,
and lost property has to be gathered from the field. Fiery spirits may dash forward over untrodden paths to learn fresh truth, and win more souls to Jesus; but some of a more conservative spirit may be well engaged in reminding the church of her ancient faith, and restoring her fainting sons. Every position has its duties, and the slowly moving children of God will find their peculiar state one in which they may be eminently a blessing to the whole host.

The rear guard is a place of danger. There are foes behind us as well as before us. Attacks may come from any quarter. We read that Amalek fell upon Israel, and slew some of the hindmost of them. The experienced Christian will find much work for his weapons in aiding those poor doubting, desponding, wavering, souls, who are hindmost in faith, knowledge, and joy. These must not be left unaided, and therefore be it the business of well-taught saints to bear their standards among the hindmost. My soul, do thou tenderly watch to help the hindmost this day.

Numbers 6:4

“All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk.” — Numbers 6:4 (from Morning and Evening)

Nazarites had taken, among other vows, one which debarred them from the use of wine. In order that they might not violate the obligation, they were forbidden to drink the vinegar of wine or strong liquors, and to make the rule still more clear, they were not to touch the unfermented juice of grapes, nor even to eat the fruit either fresh or dried. In order, altogether, to secure the integrity of the vow, they were not even allowed anything that had to do with the vine; they were, in fact, to avoid the appearance of evil. Surely this is a lesson to the Lord’s separated ones, teaching them to come away from sin in every form, to avoid not merely its grosser shapes, but even its spirit and similitude. Strict walking is much despised in these days, but rest assured, dear reader, it is both the safest and the happiest. He who yields a point or two to the world is in fearful peril; he who eats the grapes of Sodom will soon drink the wine of Gomorrah. A little crevice in the sea-bank in Holland lets in the sea, and the gap speedily swells till a province is drowned. Worldly conformity, in any degree, is a snare to the soul, and makes it more and more liable to presumptuous sins. Moreover, as the Nazarite who drank grape juice could not be quite sure whether it might not have endured a degree of fermentation, and consequently could not be clear in heart that his vow was intact, so the yielding, temporizing Christian cannot wear a conscience void of offence, but must feel that the inward monitor is in doubt of him. Things doubtful we need not doubt about; they are wrong to us. Things tempting we must not dally with, but flee from them with speed. Better be sneered at as a Puritan than be despised as a hypocrite. Careful walking may involve much self-denial, but it has pleasures of its own which are more than a sufficient recompense.

Numbers 6:24

He Blesses and Keeps (Faith’s Checkbook)

“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.” Numbers 6:24
This first clause of the high-priest's benediction is substantially a promise. That blessing which our great High Priest pronounces upon us is sure to come, for He speaks the mind of God.

What a joy to abide under the divine blessing! This puts a gracious flavor into all things. If we are blessed, then all our possessions and enjoyments are blessed; yea, our losses and crosses, and even our disappointments are blessed. God's blessing is deep, emphatic, effectual. A man's blessing may begin and end in words, but the blessing of the Lord makes rich and sanctifies. The best wish we can have for our dearest friend is not “May prosperity attend thee,” but “The Lord bless thee.”

It is equally a delightful thing to be kept of God: kept by Him, kept near Him, kept in Him. They are kept indeed whom God keeps: they are preserved from evil; they are reserved unto boundless happiness. God's keeping goes with His blessing to establish it and cause it to endure.

The author of this little book desires that the rich blessing and sure keeping here pronounced may come upon every reader who may at this moment be looking at these lines. Please breathe the text to God as a prayer for His servants.

**Numbers 11:11**

“Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant?” — Numbers 11:11 (from Morning and Evening)

Our heavenly Father sends us frequent troubles to try our faith. If our faith be worth anything, it will stand the test. Gilt is afraid of fire, but gold is not: the paste gem dreads to be touched by the diamond, but the true jewel fears no test. It is a poor faith which can only trust God when friends are true, the body full of health, and the business profitable; but that is true faith which holds by the Lord’s faithfulness when friends are gone, when the body is sick, when spirits are depressed, and the light of our Father's countenance is hidden. A faith which can say, in the direst trouble, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,” is heaven-born faith. The Lord afflicts his servants to glorify himself, for he is greatly glorified in the graces of his people, which are his own handiwork. When “tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope,” the Lord is honoured by these growing virtues. We should never know the music of the harp if the strings were left untouched; nor enjoy the juice of the grape if it were not trodden in the winepress; nor discover the sweet perfume of cinnamon if it were not pressed and beaten; nor feel the warmth of fire if the coals were not utterly consumed. The wisdom and power of the great Workman are discovered by the trials through which his vessels of mercy are permitted to pass. Present afflictions tend also to heighten future joy. There must be shades in the picture to bring out the beauty of the lights. Could we be so supremely blessed in heaven, if we had not known the curse of sin and the sorrow of earth? Will not peace be sweeter after conflict, and rest more welcome after toil? Will not the recollection of past sufferings enhance the bliss of the glorified? There are many other comfortable answers to the question with which we opened our brief meditation, let us muse upon it all day long.

**Numbers 11:23**
“Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.” — Numbers 11:23 (from Morning and Evening)

God had made a positive promise to Moses that for the space of a whole month he would feed the vast host in the wilderness with flesh. Moses, being overtaken by a fit of unbelief, looks to the outward means, and is at a loss to know how the promise can be fulfilled. He looked to the creature instead of the Creator. But doth the Creator expect the creature to fulfil his promise for him? No; he who makes the promise ever fulfils it by his own unaided omnipotence. If he speaks, it is done—done by himself. His promises do not depend for their fulfilment upon the co-operation of the puny strength of man. We can at once perceive the mistake which Moses made. And yet how commonly we do the same! God has promised to supply our needs, and we look to the creature to do what God has promised to do; and then, because we perceive the creature to be weak and feeble, we indulge in unbelief. Why look we to that quarter at all? Will you look to the north pole to gather fruits ripened in the sun? Verily, you would act no more foolishly if ye did this than when you look to the weak for strength, and to the creature to do the Creator’s work. Let us, then, put the question on the right footing. The ground of faith is not the sufficiency of the visible means for the performance of the promise, but the all-sufficiency of the invisible God, who will most surely do as he hath said. If after clearly seeing that the onus lies with the Lord and not with the creature, we dare to indulge in mistrust, the question of God comes home mightily to us: “Has the Lord’s hand waxed short?” May it happen, too, in his mercy, that with the question there may flash upon our souls that blessed declaration, “Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.”

Numbers 12:1

“He had married an Ethiopian woman.” — Numbers 12:1 (from Morning and Evening)

Strange choice of Moses, but how much more strange the choice of him who is a prophet like unto Moses, and greater than he! Our Lord, who is fair as the lily, has entered into marriage union with one who confesses herself to be black, because the sun has looked upon her. It is the wonder of angels that the love of Jesus should be set upon poor, lost, guilty men. Each believer must, when filled with a sense of Jesus’ love, be also overwhelmed with astonishment that such love should be lavished on an object so utterly unworthy of it. Knowing as we do our secret guiltiness, unfaithfulness, and black-heartedness, we are dissolved in grateful admiration of the matchless freeness and sovereignty of grace. Jesus must have found the cause of his love in his own heart, he could not have found it in us, for it is not there. Even since our conversion we have been black, though grace has made us comely. Holy Rutherford said of himself what we must each subscribe to—“His relation to me is, that I am sick, and he is the Physician of whom I stand in need. Alas! how often I play fast and loose with Christ! He bindeth, I loose; he buildeth, I cast down; I quarrel with Christ, and he agreeth with me twenty times a day!” Most tender and faithful Husband of our souls, pursue thy gracious work of conforming us to thine image, till thou shalt present even us poor Ethiopians unto thyself, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Moses met with opposition because of his marriage, and both himself and his spouse were the subjects of an
evil eye. Can we wonder if this vain world opposes Jesus and his spouse, and especially when great sinners are converted? for this is ever the Pharisee’s ground of objection, “This man receiveth sinners.” Still is the old cause of quarrel revived, “Because he had married an Ethiopian woman.”

Numbers 14:2

“And all the children of Israel murmured.” — Numbers 14:2 (from Morning and Evening)

There are murmurers amongst Christians now, as there were in the camp of Israel of old. There are those who, when the rod falls, cry out against the afflictive dispensation. They ask, “Why am I thus afflicted? What have I done to be chastened in this manner?” A word with thee, O murmurer! Why shouldst thou murmur against the dispensations of thy heavenly Father? Can he treat thee more hardly than thou deservest? Consider what a rebel thou wast once, but he has pardoned thee! Surely, if he in his wisdom sees fit now to chasten thee, thou shouldst not complain. After all, art thou smitten as hardly as thy sins deserve? Consider the corruption which is in thy breast, and then wilt thou wonder that there needs so much of the rod to fetch it out? Weigh thyself, and discern how much dross is mingled with thy gold; and dost thou think the fire too hot to purge away so much dross as thou hast? Does not that proud rebellious spirit of thine prove that thy heart is not thoroughly sanctified? Are not those murmuring words contrary to the holy submissive nature of God’s children? Is not the correction needed? But if thou wilt murmur against the chastening, take heed, for it will go hard with murmurers. God always chastises his children twice, if they do not bear the first stroke patiently. But know one thing—“He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” All his corrections are sent in love, to purify thee, and to draw thee nearer to himself. Surely it must help thee to bear the chastening with resignation if thou art able to recognize thy Father’s hand. For “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.” “Murmur not as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.”

Numbers 14:11

“How long will it be ere they believe me?” — Numbers 14:11 (from Morning and Evening)

Strive with all diligence to keep out that monster unbelief. It so dishonours Christ, that he will withdraw his visible presence if we insult him by indulging it. It is true it is a weed, the seeds of which we can never entirely extract from the soil, but we must aim at its root with zeal and perseverance. Among hateful things it is the most to be abhorred. Its injurious nature is so venomous that he that exerciseth it and he upon whom it is exercised are both hurt thereby. In thy case, O believer! it is most wicked, for the mercies of thy Lord in the past, increase thy guilt in doubting him now. When thou dost distrust the Lord Jesus, he may well cry out, “Behold I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.” This is crowning his head with thorns of the sharpest kind. It is very cruel for a well-beloved wife to mistrust a kind and faithful husband. The sin is needless, foolish, and unwarranted. Jesus has never given the slightest ground for suspicion, and it is hard to be doubted by those to
whom our conduct is uniformly affectionate and true. Jesus is the Son of the Highest, and has unbounded wealth; it is shameful to doubt Omnipotence and distrust all-sufficiency. The cattle on a thousand hills will suffice for our most hungry feeding, and the granaries of heaven are not likely to be emptied by our eating. If Christ were only a cistern, we might soon exhaust his fulness, but who can drain a fountain? Myriads of spirits have drawn their supplies from him, and not one of them has murmured at the scantiness of his resources. Away, then, with this lying traitor unbelief, for his only errand is to cut the bonds of communion and make us mourn an absent Saviour. Bunyan tells us that unbelief has “as many lives as a cat:” if so, let us kill one life now, and continue the work till the whole nine are gone. Down with thee, thou traitor, my heart abhors thee.

**Numbers 15:25**

**Sins of Ignorance** (Faith’s Checkbook)

“And it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance.”—Numbers 15:25

BECAUSE of our ignorance, we are not fully aware of our sins of ignorance. Yet we may be sure they are many in the form both of commission and omission. We may be doing in all sincerity, as a service to God, that which He has never commanded and can never accept.

The Lord knows these sins of ignorance, every one. This may well alarm us, since in justice He will require these trespasses at our hand; but on the other hand, faith spies comfort in this fact, for the Lord will see to it that stains unseen by us shall yet be washed away. He sees the sin that He may cease to see it by casting it behind His back.

Our great comfort is that Jesus, the true priest, has made atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel. That atonement secures the pardon of unknown sins. His precious blood cleanses us from all sin. Whether our eyes have seen it and wept over it or not, God has seen it, Christ has atoned for it, the Spirit bears witness to the pardon of it, and so we have a three-fold peace.

O my Father, I praise thy divine knowledge, which not only perceives my iniquities, but provides an atonement which delivers me from the guilt of them, even before I know that I am guilty.

**Numbers 21:8**

**Look and Live** (Faith’s Checkbook)

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.”—Numbers 21:8

THIS is a glorious gospel type. Jesus, numbered with the transgressors, hangs before us on the cross. A look to Him will heal us of the serpent-bite of sin, will heal us at once: “When he looketh upon it, he shall live.” Let the reader who is mourning his sinfulness note the words, “Everyone that looketh upon it shall live.” Every looker will find this true. I have found it so. I looked to Jesus and lived at once. I know I did. Reader, if you look to Jesus you will live too. True, you are swelling with the venom and you see no hope. True, also there is no hope but this one. But this is no doubtful cure, “Everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall
live.”

The brazen serpent was not lifted up as a curiosity to be gazed upon by the healthy; but its special purpose was for those who were “bitten.” Jesus died as a real Savior for real sinners. Whether the bite has made you a drunkard, or a thief, or an unchaste or a profane person, a look at the Great Savior will heal you of these diseases and make you live in holiness and communion with God. Look and live.

**Numbers 21:17**

“Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it.” — Numbers 21:17 (from Morning and Evening)

Famous was the well of Beer in the wilderness, because it was the subject of a promise: “That is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water.” The people needed water, and it was promised by their gracious God. We need fresh supplies of heavenly grace, and in the covenant the Lord has pledged himself to give all we require. The well next became the cause of a song. Before the water gushed forth, cheerful faith prompted the people to sing; and as they saw the crystal fount bubbling up, the music grew yet more joyous. In like manner, we who believe the promise of God should rejoice in the prospect of divine revivals in our souls, and as we experience them our holy joy should overflow. Are we thirsting? Let us not murmur, but sing. Spiritual thirst is bitter to bear, but we need not bear it—the promise indicates a well; let us be of good heart, and look for it. Moreover, the well was the centre of prayer. “Spring up, O well.” What God has engaged to give, we must enquire after, or we manifest that we have neither desire nor faith. This evening let us ask that the Scripture we have read, and our devotional exercises, may not be an empty formality, but a channel of grace to our souls. O that God the Holy Spirit would work in us with all his mighty power, filling us with all the fulness of God. Lastly, the well was the object of effort. “The nobles of the people digged it with their staves.” The Lord would have us active in obtaining grace. Our staves are ill adapted for digging in the sand, but we must use them to the utmost of our ability. Prayer must not be neglected; the assembling of ourselves together must not be forsaken; ordinances must not be slighted. The Lord will give us his peace most plenteously, but not in a way of idleness. Let us, then, bestir ourselves to seek him in whom are all our fresh springs.

**Numbers 23:9**

**Among the Redeemed** (Faith's Checkbook)

“Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.”—Numbers 23:9

WHO would wish to dwell among the nations and to be numbered with them? Why, even the professing church is such that to follow the Lord fully within its bounds is very difficult. There is such a mingling and mixing that one often sighs for “a lodge in some vast wilderness.”

Certain it is that the Lord would have His people follow a separated path as to the world and come out decidedly and distinctly from it. We are set apart by the divine decree, purchase, and calling, and our inward experience has made us greatly to differ from men of the world.
Therefore, our place is not in their Vanity Fair, nor in their City of Destruction, but in the narrow way where all true pilgrims must follow their Lord.

This may not only reconcile us to the world’s cold shoulder and sneers, but even cause us to accept them with pleasure as being a part of our covenant portion. Our names are not in the same book; we are not of the same seed; we are not bound for the same place; neither are we trusting to the same guide. Therefore, it is well that we are not of their number. Only let us be found in the number of the redeemed, and we are content to be odd and solitary to the end of the chapter.

**Numbers 23:23**

*God Routes Fear* (Faith’s Checkbook)

“Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel.”—Numbers 23:23

HOW this should cut up root and branch all silly, superstitious fears! Even if there were any truth in witchcraft and omens, they could not affect the people of the Lord. Those whom God blesses, devils cannot curse.

Ungodly men, like Balaam, may cunningly plot the overthrow of the Lord’s Israel; but with all their secrecy and policy they are doomed to fail. Their powder is damp, the edge of their sword is blunted. They gather together; but as the Lord is not with them, they gather together in vain. We may sit still, and let them weave their nets, for we shall not be taken in them. Though they call in the aid of Beelzebub and employ all his serpentine craft, it will avail them nothing: the spells will not work; the divination will deceive them. What a blessing this is! How it quiets the heart! God’s Jacobs wrestle with God, but none shall wrestle with them and prevail. God’s Israels have power with God and prevail, but none shall have power to prevail against them. We need not fear the fiend himself, nor any of those secret enemies whose words are full of deceit and whose plans are deep and unfathomable. They cannot hurt those who trust in the living God. We defy the devil and all his legions.

**Numbers 32:6**

“Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?” — Numbers 32:6 (from Morning and Evening)

Kindred has its obligations. The Reubenites and Gadites would have been unbrotherly if they had claimed the land which had been conquered, and had left the rest of the people to fight for their portions alone. We have received much by means of the efforts and sufferings of the saints in years gone by, and if we do not make some return to the church of Christ by giving her our best energies, we are unworthy to be enrolled in her ranks. Others are combating the errors of the age manfully, or excavating perishing ones from amid the ruins of the fall, and if we fold our hands in idleness we had need be warned, lest the curse of Meroz fall upon us. The Master of the vineyard saith, “Why stand ye here all the day idle?” What is the idler’s excuse? Personal service of Jesus becomes all the more the duty of all because it is cheerfully and abundantly rendered by some. The toils of devoted missionaries and fervent ministers shame us if we sit still in indolence. Shrinking from trial is the temptation of those
who are at ease in Zion: they would fain escape the cross and yet wear the crown; to them the question for this evening’s meditation is very applicable. If the most precious are tried in the fire, are we to escape the crucible? If the diamond must be vexed upon the wheel, are we to be made perfect without suffering? Who hath commanded the wind to cease from blowing because our bark is on the deep? Why and wherefore should we be treated better than our Lord? The firstborn felt the rod, and why not the younger brethren? It is a cowardly pride which would choose a downy pillow and a silken couch for a soldier of the cross. Wiser far is he who, being first resigned to the divine will, growth by the energy of grace to be pleased with it, and so learns to gather lilies at the cross foot, and, like Samson, to find honey in the lion.

OTHER DEVOTIONALS
ON THE BOOK OF NUMBERS
F B Meyer
Woodrow Kroll
Theodore Epp

Numbers 10:1-13
Theodore Epp
Back to the Bible
Moving Ahead!

The 11 months at Sinai had brought about many changes in the life of Israel. The people had arrived at Sinai a fugitive and unorganized people; they left a well-organized nation, molded into a commonwealth of 12 tribes. All was beautifully ordered.

Moses had spent the first 40 years of his life being trained in the courts of Pharaoh as a possible successor to Pharaoh. As such, Moses was trained in organization, and the writings of Josephus assert that he was the general of the Egyptian army."

He learned all that would be necessary to lead the greatest nation on earth at that time.

Moses used all the knowledge he had accumulated in leading the Israelites. It was not, however, the unaided genius of Moses that God used. God leads through minds competent to receive and transmit His teaching.

In Moses' case, his mental abilities were used to transmit to the Israelites an order of organization that was second to none. What Moses had learned in the world was translated into use for the glory of God.

The Israelites left Sinai as a mighty nation in battle array. They had been furnished with a code of laws, including sanitary regulations, which have been a model for civilized peoples of the world.
They had also been provided with a system of sacrifices that continued for centuries. These sacrifices prophetically pointed to the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ for believers.

"Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. 2:4).

Complaining Is Contagious

The mixed multitude (Num. 11:4) was probably a group of Gentiles who left Egypt with the Israelites. Although the complaining was started by the mixed multitude, the Israelites were also guilty of complaining.

This indicates how infectious a complaining attitude can be. Because every person has a sin nature, it does not take long even for believers to become disheartened and to develop an attitude of complaining against the goodness of God.

After salvation, Christians too often remember what they enjoyed in the world and occasionally long for the pleasures of sin. When this happens, the believer is guilty of leaving his first love.

Christians who have not grown spiritually as they should, through the reading of God's Word and applying it to daily life, find it easy to murmur as the Israelites did.

Only a small minority may begin the complaining, but the Christian who is not mature is also susceptible. Just as the bark of one dog can start a whole group of dogs barking, one complaining believer can affect an entire group.

Many pastors have had their hearts broken, and church work has been greatly hampered by a few disgruntled people who influence the entire church.

Every church group seems to have a few people who find it easy to complain about anything. Unless the other believers are mature, they will soon follow the pattern of the murmuring, weak believer.

"Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door" (James 5:9, NASB).

Jealousy Uses Spiritual Cloak

Miriam and Aaron were Moses' older sister and brother. But even they took issue with Moses' leadership, although at first their complaints concerned his wife.
Numbers 12 does not specifically say what Miriam and Aaron found objectionable about Moses' wife, but jealousy must have been the main problem.

This jealousy took its usual hypocritical turn. Miriam and Aaron did not talk to Moses about his wife; instead, they complained about his authority.

How easy it is to disguise jealousy beneath a cloak of zeal for the law of God or to think of oneself as pure while rebuking somebody else's faults. Real jealousy originates from power hunger, and it usually breaks out in faultfinding, just as it did in this case.

We need to spend time in the Word and be alone with God until we are more concerned about His honor than our own. We do not have to worry about competition from other believers; our concern is only to glorify the Lord in all that we do.

When a Christian is more concerned about God's honor than about his own, God will take care of his worries about competition from fellow believers.

Granted, it is much easier to say this than to really live it, but we must come to grips with this problem if we are going to have victory in our Christian lives. We must be aware of the indwelling Christ and rely on Him to give us victory in these areas.

"For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing" (James 3:16, NASB).

**Numbers 12:3**  
Theodore Epp  
**Back to the Bible**

**Meekness: Strength Under Control**

Numbers 12:3; Galatians 5:22,23; Colossians 3:12

In reviewing Isaac's life, we should also take special note of his spirit of meekness. All through his life his temperament was of a passive nature rather than of an active or aggressive nature.

In childhood he was subjected to the insults of Ishmael, but there is no record that he became angry about them. As a young man he was taken to Mount Moriah to be offered as a sacrifice, and in meekness he surrendered and made himself available.

He did not even choose his own wife, as she was chosen for him through his father's arrangements and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Isaac also accepted the rebuke of Abimelech in meekness. There were no reprisals. He and his men yielded whenever they were wrongly driven away from the wells they had redug.

Isaac's meek spirit brought forth praise from even his enemies. They testified concerning his...
great power and might and their realization that the Lord was with him.

The world thinks little of meekness, yet it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23). The Apostle Paul urged all Christians: "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5).

Meekness involves the self-sacrifice of our own desires and interests. Because Isaac gladly gave up his own personal desires, it pleased God to refer to Himself as "the God of Isaac."

"For thus saith the Lord God,... In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15).

**Numbers 13:23**  
J R Miller

They... cut down ... a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff. - Numbers 13:23

God has sent over into our earthly wilderness-life many samples of the good things of the heavenly life - foretastes of the full glories there awaiting us.

The joy, peace, love, and grace we get here are very sweet, but they are just little specimens of fruits that grow everywhere in the Better-Land. The old rabbis say that when the famine began in Egypt and the storehouses were opened, Joseph threw the chaff of the grain upon the Nile, that it might float down on the river and show those who lived below that there was abundance of provision laid up for them farther up the river.

So the blessings of divine grace, which we enjoy in this world, are little more than the husks of the heavenly good things, sent down on the river of divine grace as foretastes or intimations of what is in store for us in heaven. The joy the Christian has here is deep and rich, but heaven's joy is infinitely deeper and richer.

**Numbers 13:1-3, 25-33**  
Theodore Epp  
**Back to the Bible**

Walking by Sight, Not by Faith

In addition to being characterized by unbelief, the Israelites were also characterized by self-will.

Concerning the Israelites, the psalmist said, "They quickly forgot His works; they did not wait for His counsel, but craved intensely in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. So He gave them their request, but sent a wasting disease among them" (Ps. 106:13-15, NASB).

The King James Version translates this last verse: "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul" (v. 15). This reveals that God sometimes permits what is not in His direct will. It also reveals that the individual loses out spiritually.

What a paradox! The Israelites were to walk by faith, but they wanted to send spies into the land (see Deut. 1:19-23). What does faith want with spies? Apparently they were more
concerned about walking by sight than by faith.

Many believers today find it extremely difficult to take God at His word. Instead of walking by faith, they want proofs about the future beyond what God has said and the power He has demonstrated.

They are just like the Israelites who wanted to send spies into the land so they would know what it was like and how strong it was. Then they would choose whether or not to go in.

Every believer should remember 2 Corinthians 5:7: "(For we walk by faith, not by sight.)"

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col. 2:6).

**Numbers 14:26-38**

Theodore Epp

Back to the Bible

**God's Judgment Falls**

Even Joshua and Caleb, who dared to believe God, had to return to the wilderness with the others. Joshua and Caleb had to suffer along with them for 38 more years. This is an example of the way decisions affect other people.

But the faith of Joshua and Caleb was characterized by great patience. Because they believed God, they were able to endure even the experiences of the desert without losing hope.

After God pronounced that none would enter the land except Joshua and Caleb and the younger generation, the Bible records God's judgment on the ten spies. They were judged by physical death right there and then.

"The men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord" (Num. 14:36,37).

Surely this judgment caused the others to realize that the Lord was not to be trifled with. This surely underscored in their minds that God expects to be taken at His word and not mocked by unbelief.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

**Numbers 18:20**

Our Daily Walk

F B Meyer

**THE PSALM OF INHERITANCE**
"I am thy portion and thine inheritance among the children of Israel."-- Numbers 18:20.

"The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him."-- Lam 3:24.

IT IS a wonderful thing when we can look upon God as being our portion, when we can lay our hand upon all His nature and say there is nothing in God which will not in some way contribute to my strength and joy. It makes one think of the early days of the settlement of emigrants in the Far West of Canada or Australia. The settler and his family would slowly travel forward, with their implements and seeds, till they reached the plot of ground allocated to them by the Government. At first the family would encamp on the edge of it, then they would prospect it, and go to and fro over its acres with a sense that it all belonged to them, though it needed to be brought under cultivation. In the first year, within the fence hastily constructed, the farmer and his sons would begin to cultivate some small portion of their newly-acquired territory. This would yield the first crops; next year they would press the fences farther out, until at the end of a term of years the whole would have been brought under cultivation.

So it is with the mighty Nature of God. when first we are converted and led to know Him for ourselves, we can claim to apprehend but a small portion of the length and depth and breadth and height of His Love; but as the years go slowly on, amid the circumstances of trouble and temptation and the loss of earthly things, we are led to make more and more of God, until the immensity of our inheritance, which can never be fully explored or utilized, breaks upon our understanding. No wonder that the Psalmist breaks forth into thanksgiving in Ps 16:6-7, and Psalm 91.

The devout soul rejoices in God as his great Inheritance. When He is always present to our mind, when we are constantly making use of Him, when we find ourselves naturally turning to Him through the hours of the day, then such quiet peace and rest settle down upon us that we cannot be moved by any anxiety of the present or future. Death itself will make no difference, except that the body which has obscured our vision will be left behind, and the emancipated soul will be able more fully to expatiate in its inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading (1Pe 1:4-5).

PRAYER: We thank Thee, O Lord, that all things are ours in Christ, working for us, co-operating with us, and bearing us onward to that glorious destiny for which Thou art preparing us. AMEN.

Numbers 20:1-13a, 22-29
Theodore Epp
Back to the Bible

Christ Our Rock

The rock mentioned in Exodus 17 foreshadowed Christ on the cross because there He was smitten. However, the rock of Numbers 20 foreshadowed the ascended Christ, who now intercedes as a High Priest for believers.

The significant difference in the rocks of Exodus 17 and Numbers 20 is also indicated in that
a different word for "rock" is used in these two passages.

Although both rocks speak of Christ, God was endeavoring to communicate two different things to us concerning the Person of Christ.

In Exodus 17 the rock was smitten, just as Christ was "smitten of God" (Isa. 53:4) and was "bruised for our iniquities" (v. 5).

The rock of Numbers 20 foreshadowed Christ in the heavens, as referred to in Hebrews 9:24: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

In the incident of Numbers 20 the rock foreshadowed the exalted Christ, and that is why it needed only to be spoken to.

It is so important that this distinction between the smitten Christ and the exalted Christ as He is foreshadowed in the two rocks be maintained.

Since the Lord Jesus Christ has been judged on the cross by having all of the sins of the world placed on Him, those of us who have received Him as Saviour need now to speak to Him for our needs.

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4).

**Numbers 30:2**

**Woodrow Kroll**

**Back to the Bible**

As Good As Your Word by Tony Beckett and Woodrow Kroll

Numbers 29-31, Mark 9:1-29

Key Verse: Numbers 30:2

Although today a Christian is not under responsibility to fulfill the ceremonial law, the New Testament emphasis on the moral law is strong. We may not make vows as is referenced in Numbers 30:2, but we are to be truthful people. Moses commanded the Israelites that a man "must not break his word but must do everything he said."

In the course of a year, a person makes many more "vows" than is probably realized. For example, each credit card slip we sign is a vow. Don't sign unless you intend to pay. A tax form will ask if the answers given were truthful. Don't sign unless they were. A code of conduct may be included in the regulations for a student or an employer. Don't sign unless you plan to live by it.

Then there are the other slips-not of paper, but of tongue. "I'll get back to you about that." "The check is in the mail." "We will get together for a meal while you are in town."

Jesus said, "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes
from the evil one” (see note Matthew 5:37).

How good is your word? And are you as good as your word?

Think before you speak today. Ask yourself, "Will I do what I am about to say?" Keep your word.

**Numbers 32:6-7**

*Woodrow Kroll*

**Back to the Bible**

Discouraging by Default by Tony Beckett and Woodrow Kroll

Numbers 32-34, Mark 9:30-50

Key Verses: Numbers 32:6-7

"Looking out for number one" is an old saying, but its sentiment is as popular as ever. We have been taught that we can have it our way and that we deserve a break today.

Too often a Christian can be subtly sucked into thinking about self with little regard for others. The follower of Christ, however, must remember that every believer is part of the Body and must consider how individual actions affect others.

This is not a new problem. The Reubenites, Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh liked the look of the land east of the Jordan. It was suitable for livestock. Their request to stay there seemed reasonable.

But Moses saw the effect it would have on Israel: "Shall your countrymen go to war while you sit here? Why do you discourage the [nation]?” (Numbers 31:6-7).

To their credit, when reminded of similar past situations and when made aware of how their action would affect others, these tribes did not choose to be discouragers. Yes, their families and livestock remained, but the men went to war with the rest of Israel.

Too often people in the church think of themselves and not how their choices might discourage others. Determine to encourage others by your actions as well as your words.

You can be an encourager or a discourager. Putting your interests first can discourage others. Choose to be an encourager.

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**The Lord Bless You And Keep You Numbers 6:22-27 - Robert Morgan**

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: “The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”’ “So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.”—Numbers 6:22-27

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This week I’ve been in correspondence with Dr. Judith M. Hadley of Villanova University in Pennsylvania regarding a sensational archaeological discovery she made in Jerusalem back in 1979. At the beginning of the Twentieth Century, we did not have any truly ancient original-language copies of the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures. The oldest extant copy of the Old Testament dated from about a thousand years after Christ. The critics, therefore, questioned the accuracy of the transmission of the text of the Old Testament. They said, “We cannot trust the Hebrew Scriptures. It must be riddled with discrepancies and errors due to hundreds of years of unattested transmission. As it was copied, mistakes were made; and as it was recopied and recopied, those mistakes multiplied.

Then in 1949, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, pushing back the date of our oldest extant Hebrew Scriptures by a thousand years, to just before the time of Christ. When we compared these Dead Sea Scrolls to our older copies, the critics were silenced. The transmission of the Old Testament text turned out to be exceedingly accurate.

But in 1979, an even older copy of a biblical text, just a fragment, was discovered by Dr. Hadley. She was excavating a burial cave in Jerusalem’s Hinnom Valley, and she saw a tiny round piece of silver on the ground. She told me it looked something like the metal top to a pencil that keeps the eraser on. Another excavator said that it resembled a cigarette butt. A second, similar artifact was found nearby.

Two tiny silver scrolls—amulets—were found that had apparently been worn as a piece of jewelry. They were so ancient and fragile that it took several years for Israeli scientists to figure out how to clean, open, and unroll them. But when they did, they found what we now know to be the oldest known fragment of Scripture in existence—our oldest extant copy of Scripture, dating to the days of the Davidic dynasty hundreds of years or so before Christ. It actually dates from the Old Testament era itself.

Inscribed on those scrolls, which you can now see displayed in the Israeli Museum in Jerusalem, are the words we have read for our text today, the Aaronic benediction or the priestly blessing of Numbers 6.

This is one of the most significant passages in the Old Testament, yet I’ve never preached a sermon on it, I’ve never heard a sermon on it, and I’ve never read a sermon on it. But as I have studied it in preparation for today’s message, I’ve been blessed and amazed at how wonderfully this little paragraph of Scripture meets our needs. I can understand why some ancient Jewish girl wanted it engraved on silver to wear around her neck day and night. Let’s read it again, and then I want to make some observations about this portion of Scripture that we sometimes call the Aaronic or Priestly Blessing or Benediction:

> And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: “The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”’ So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.”

First, a little background. The book of Numbers is a sort of manual telling the nation of Israel how to function after leaving Mount Sinai. Among other things, various instructions were given to the Levites and priests. They were told how to go about their religious duties, how to minister before the Lord, and, in this passage, how to bless the people.

We call this ancient blessing the Priestly Blessing, because it was to be pronounced by the priests upon Israel. Sometimes we call it the Aaronic Blessing or Benediction, because it was
given to Aaron, the chief priest. Today I’d like to show you four aspects of this Aaronic Benediction.

Blessing in Triplicate

First, it a blessing given in triplicate. It is a tripartite blessing. It has three stanzas:
· The Lord bless you and keep you.
· The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you.
· The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Notice the three-fold use of God’s name: The Lord... the Lord... the Lord.... What is the significance of the three-fold nature of this blessing? First, the three-fold nature represented to the fullness of God’s blessing. He wasn’t just blessing them, He was blessing and blessing and blessing again. It reminds us of the three-fold nature of the angelic song in Isaiah 6: Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty. The triple use of the word intensifies the reality to an infinite degree. As the writer of Ecclesiastes put it: “A three-fold cord is not quickly broken.”

But I think there’s an even greater significance to this triune formula. As one old commentator put it, “There lurks here the suggestion of the Trinity.” I don’t believe the Children of Israel, at this point in biblical revelation, yet understood the doctrine of the Trinity as we do today, but the book of Numbers wasn’t just written for them. These passages were written for us, too—for God’s people of all ages. Looking at it now, through the lens of subsequent revelation, we can appreciate it more. And from our perspective it seems natural to understand that the three-fold blessing of Numbers 6 implies that the blessings are being bestowed by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Lord... The Lord... The Lord....

Some of the old Bible scholars whose books I consulted as I prepared this message made an interesting suggestion. They felt that the three stanzas in Numbers 6 should be read with the Trinity in mind, like this:
· The Lord God the Father bless you and keep you.
· The Lord God the Son—Jesus Christ—make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
· The Lord God the Holy Spirit lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

I think they may well be correct. God the Father is the source of all blessing. It is the face of God the Son that we see, and He sheds His light on us. It is God the Holy Spirit who brings all these blessings in our lives and bestows peace in our hearts. The Bible calls Him the “Comforter.”

Another thing that reinforces this interpretation is this—there are two great benedictions or blessings in the Bible—one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament. The New Testament counterpart to Numbers 6 is found in 2 Corinthians 13:14, and it is distinctively Trinitarian: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

All of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—all there is of God loves you and wants to bless you and keep you and fill you with the sunshine of His presence. What a glorious thought.

Blessings from Christ

Now, here’s a second observation. While the blessings may be from the Triune God, the Bless-er Himself is the Lord Jesus, of whom Aaron was a “type.” Look again at Numbers 6: And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, “This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them...”
This blessing could not be uttered by just anyone. It was a priestly blessing. It was the Aaronic blessing, given to Aaron as the High Priest of Israel representing Almighty God. Now we know from Hebrews 5 that Aaron was a type of Christ. He was a forerunner or foreshadowing of Christ, our Great High Priest.

Do you know what was our Lord’s very last act of ministry on this earth before returning to heaven? Luke’s Gospel ends with these words:

And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

Acts 3:26 says: To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who pronounces upon the lives of His children the richest gifts of the Trinity. He is constantly holding His nail-scarred hands over your head, over your life, over your family, saying, “The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon You and give you peace.”

If we could just realize that, if we could just visualize that, if we could just believe that, what a difference it would make every day. I believe that’s why we can say, “Surely goodness and mercy follows me all the days of my life.” That’s why we can say, “This is the day the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.” That’s why we can say, “Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.”

Blessings with Authority

Here’s a third thing we can say about the Aaronic benediction. It conveys blessings with authority. This benediction wasn’t just an expression of good will. We often say, “God bless you,” as an expression of good will. Whenever we use the simple English term, “Goodbye,” it is a contraction of the phrase, “God be with you,” or “God bless you.” When the President gives a speech, he often ends with the words, “God bless the United States of America.” When I sign a book, I usually write, “God bless you.”

But when Aaron stood before the encamped millions of Israel, lifted his hands, and pronounced the blessing in Numbers 6, it was more than just an expression of good will. It was also more than a simple prayer.

It was Aaron, God’s ambassador, standing in the place of Almighty God, endued with the authority of Almighty God, using the Divine Name, using the appointed words of God Himself, to pronounce God’s blessings on the congregation, as it is when the Lord Jesus blesses us.

Blessings According to our Needs

Now, finally, I want to share the fourth and the primary thing about this blessing. It was a blessing that corresponds to our needs. There are three sections, but each section has two parts, so there are six components to this blessings. And all six correspond to where we are, to the needs we have.

A. The Lord Bless You

The first phrase says, “The Lord bless you....” The word “bless” is a Hebrew word that you’re already familiar with if you’re keeping up with news from the Middle East. It is the word, “Barak.” The former Prime Minister of Israel is a man named Ehud Barak. This is a very common Old Testament word, occurring (with its derivatives) about 415 times in the Hebrew
Scriptures. It implied life, health, and prosperity. In fact, these blessings are spelled out in Deuteronomy 28:

“Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. 2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God. “Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. “Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. “Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. “Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. “The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. “The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you. “The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord….”

The book of Ephesians is the New Testament counterpart to that, especially Ephesians 1-3 which is a sort of inventory of our blessings in Christ. The tone for the book of Ephesians is set at the very beginning of the book where we read: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

B. The Lord Keep You

The second pronouncement is, “The Lord keep you.” The Hebrew word for keep (shamar/shaw-*mar) conveyed the idea of protection. This is the word the Hebrews used for a shepherd’s keeping watch over a flock of sheep. Strong’s Enhanced Dictionary of Old Testament words suggests that, in its root form, this word meant “to hedge about.” The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, a great resource, defines this term as meaning, “to exercise great care over.” Just think of it—the Lord exercises great care over us. It reminds us of 1 Peter 5: “Casting all your care on Him, for He cares for you.” The Lord exercises personal care over us. He keeps us.

C. The Lord Make His Face Shine Upon You

The third pronouncement says, “The Lord make His face shine upon you.” Here the idea is that of sunshine. Some animals are nocturnal. They live in the shadows and in the caves and they come alive in the night. But how wonderful to be creatures of the day, to dwell in the sunshine, to let the sun shine upon us.

Here the pronouncement is that the Lord’s presence will be to our souls what sunshine is to our bodies, and it conveys the idea of restoration. When I was a child, I won a little object at Vacation Bible School. It was a cross or a Bible or something like that—I don’t remember exactly—but it was luminescent. In other words, it would glow in the dark. But I found that it glowed much better if I held it up to the light bulb for a few minutes before bedtime. Somehow it was of a material that just soaked up the light, and afterward it glowed through the night. That’s the idea here. We’re made to soak up the light, the joy, the truth, the radiance, the enthusiasm of Almighty God. We need to be close to Him. We need to be in His
Word. We need to worship Him, and love Him, and spend much time in prayer. And in the
darkness of this present age we’ll glow, and others can see the cross of Jesus Christ because
it will glow through our lives in the dark. So the High Priest said, “The Lord make His light
bulb to shine brightly into your luminescent soul. The Lord make His face to shine upon
you.”

D. The Lord Be Gracious To You

The fourth pronouncement was, “The Lord be gracious to you.” The word “gracious” here
meant “kind and beneficent.” We get our wonderful word “Grace” from this word. I looked
this up in Webster’s Dictionary, and it said: “Marked by kindness and courtesy. merciful and
compassionate.” Among the ideas contained in this word “gracious” is the idea of
forgiveness. There is a pardoning implication to this word.

A lady called me this week to tell me how wonderfully she had been delivered from shame in
her life. God had not only forgiven her sins, He had removed her sense of guilt and shame.
That’s what He does through the shed blood of Jesus.

E. The Lord Lift Up His Countenance Upon You

The fifth pronouncement is, “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you.” This is similar to
the third petition, but it is worded more strongly and it implies a more personal and
individual attention from the Lord.

In the Old Testament, the relationship that two people had with one another was often
expressed in terms of their countenances, or facial expressions. For example, when Cain
became angry with his brother Abel and with the Lord Himself, it says that his countenance
fell. When Laban became frustrated with his nephew Jacob, it says that his countenance
fell. When Laban became frustrated with his nephew Jacob, it says that his countenance was
not favorable toward him.

Matthew Henry said that the idea of the phrase lift up His countenance is that of sensing
God’s smile. When a person was given an audience in an ancient Middle Eastern court, the
monarch might not even look in that person’s direction. The monarch might look at the
claimant, but with an expression of wrath. How pleasant it was, however, when the monarch
looked with pleasure on the one who had come before his throne. How wondrous when that
smiling monarch is the King of kings and Lord of lords, and when He grants His peace!”
The real idea here involves fellowshipping with God, living in His presence, enjoying the
pleasure of His company.

A. The Lord Give You Peace

The word is the familiar Shalom. Recently I read the autobiography of a great lady, a
missionary to China named Bertha Smith. She said that as she was preparing to sail for
China in the early 1930s, she prayed for three months that God would choose the steamer
on which she would sail and that He would keep her from seasickness. She ended up on a
Danish ship, and there she had the opportunity of witnessing to a number of passengers.

One day they sailed through a terrific gale. Bertha stood in a sheltered place in the middle of
the back deck, holding the railing with both hands, and marveled at what they were passing
through. About noon, a tremendous wave struck the ship. Dishes on the dining room table
went smashing to the floor. Men turned white with fear and women screamed as they were
hurled across the room. No sooner was one such shock over than another followed. All day
long the grim-faced captain remained on the bridge at the helm, and the first officer went
from passenger to passenger administering tranquilizers. There was a distinct possibility, if
one of those mountainous waves should strike the ship full force, it would be destroyed.
Bertha found a woman to whom she had been witnessing and who was overwhelmed with terror, and she used it as an opportunity of sharing her faith. “I was able to tell her of my own assurance that Jesus had come aboard that ship in Los Angeles, for He was living in my heart. The ship on which He traveled could not go down, unless He willed it.”

Bertha later wrote these words that have come to mean a great deal to me, because they describe how we should respond to the storms of life that we ourselves face from time to time:

“Words cannot describe the feeling in my heart! It was more than assurance and rest of mind. It was joy unspeakable bubbling up and filling my soul! God the all-terrible, God the Creator and Controller of all the forces of nature, was in tenderest love surrounding me, His child. In fact, from His Word I knew that I was with Christ, so hidden in God that I was just as safe from the power of the angry billows as if I had been in heaven itself! All that I could do was to rejoice in it and praise Him.”

That, it seems to me, is shalom. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace—in shalom, shalom—whose mind is stayed on Thee, because He trustest in Thee.”

Blessings Equated To the Name of God
So these are the six petitions. Now, there is one other aspect of this Aaronic benediction to consider in closing. These blessing are equated to the Name of God being placed upon our lives. Look at the concluding verse 27: So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.

The blessings of Jesus Christ on our lives indicate that He has put His name on us, that we are called by His name, that we are part of His family. Have you become a part of His family? Do you need His blessings? Are you ready to turn from sin and Satan, and to give your life wholeheartedly to Him? When you do, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself lifts His pierced hand over you and says:

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.