

Numbers 1 - 36

David Rountree

Introduction:

1. The book gets its name (1:1-2; 26:1-2).
2. The "numbering" is a registration for service. As in the New Testament, every believer is a minister/soldier. We all have something to do for the Lord (Eph. 2:10).
3. This book also begins with the word "*and*" or "*then*" revealing Moses' continuing revelation from God. The connection: In Genesis man is created and ruined; in Exodus he is redeemed; in Leviticus he is taught the proper worship of God; and in Numbers he is taught to serve God in every area of life.
4. Numbers reveals the movement of Israel from the wilderness of Sinai to the region of Moab, which bordered the Promised Land.

Outline: Preparations at Sinai for journey to Canaan (1-9)
 Journey to Moab (10-21)
 Events in Moab before entrance into Canaan (22-36)

Getting Organized at Sinai (1:1-10:10)

1. These chapters reveal the need for organization and order (cf. 1 Cor. 14:40).
 - The numbering and arrangement of tribes (1-2)
 - Choosing and assigning duties to Levites (3-4).
 - Laws for purity of the camp (5-6).
 - Laws for offerings and worship (7-8).
 - Laws for the Passover (9:1-14).
 - Signals for marching and assembling (9:15 - 10:10).
2. Consider 1:3, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 45.
3. Consider 9:15-23.
4. Consider how a personal saving relationship with Jesus is like the numbers experience of a cloud by day and a fire by night to guide you.

A Long Wandering Journey to Moab (10:11 - 21:35)

1. The words of the church: "We will do you good" (10:29-32).
2. The church grumbles and complains (11:1-4, 33-34; 12:1-16; 16 & 20; Phil. 2:14-15).
3. The report of the spies (13:30, 31; 14:4).
4. The reason for failure to enter God's promises (Heb. 3:19). The consequences of this failure (Ps. 95:10-11).
5. Salvation is in God alone (21:5-7)

Events at Moab (22-36)

1. This section reveals how God will bless those who did not die in the 38 years of wandering (those 20 years of age or younger when the spies first entered the promise land, along with Joshua and Caleb).
2. God provides great blessing and victory (see 23:7-12; 23, 24, 24:3-10, 15-25; 31; 32).

Application:

1. Realize God wants our able service. He has called, gifted, and equipped every believer in Christ to serve him. There is no such thing as an inactive church member. Every member of the body of Christ is to be doing what God has called him to do in service for him (cf. Eph. 4:11-16).
2. Understand that irresponsibility in our service for God produces sad consequences. Many people are wandering around in their spiritual lives like swinging doors that have lots of motion but get no place. Our failure to advance in Christ is the result of our own irresponsibility. The solution to spiritual growth is the complete surrender to Christ in everything (Ps. 37:3-6).
3. Know that God requires us to live our lives without any grumbling or complaining (Phil. 2:14-15). It takes practically no effort, no talent, no self-denial, no brains, and no character to grumble. It never makes a burden lighter or our ministry and advancement in Christ more effective. Instead of grumbling we need to exercise faith in a God who has promised to lead us, protect us, and provide for us (Heb. 10:38; 11:6).
4. Rejoice in a God who reveals his ability to provide for our every need according to his riches in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19). The book of Numbers reveals that our God is the God who gave food (11:6-9), meat (11:31-33), water (20:8), leaders (1:1,3), and land (14:7,8). Our God always gave whatever was needed. He has given us Christ and he will freely give us with Christ all things (Rom. 8:32).