

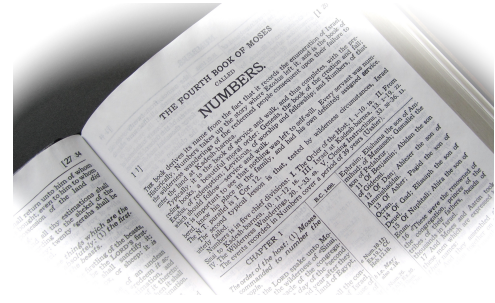
Books of The Bible

A Survey of Numbers

Introduction

Knowing that Numbers is part of God's inspired word (2 Tim. 3:16), it was (in part) written for our learning (1 Cor. 10:5-11) and comfort (Rom. 15:4).

There are passages in Numbers which seem so out of place or disconnected with the context, but that is never so. God is the God of order and every section is in its perfect place, which when we are enlightened to the "key" of the book, it will be seen to be so. There are no doubt passages which are not in chronological order and for such we seek the answer. For instance, the Tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month, in the second year (Ex. 40:17).



Before it was set up there is the record of the passover (Ex. 12:1-36), the leaving of Ramses in Egypt (Ex. 12:37); the journey, arrival, and encampment in the wilderness of Sinai (Ex. 19:1); the giving of the law etc. (Ex. 20:1-17); the LORD speaking to Moses in the Tabernacle (Num. 1:1); then the ordering of the camp (Num. chs. 1-6). It is after these things Numbers goes back to the day the Tabernacle was set up (Num. 7:1). Since this is not in chronological order, then the thought flow of the book must be different.

The Crisis Point

The crisis point of Numbers is when the people believed the report of the "human rationalisers" but did not believe the word of the Lord. He had promised to bring them to a land of milk and honey, to an inheritance their eyes had not yet seen, but when the moment for moving forward into their inheritance came, they refused to enter because of unbelief. This attitude is so vital that God will have it repeated six times (Psa. 78:22, 32; 106:24; Heb. 3:18; Jude 5). The dreadfulness of the audacity to call God a liar.

The Spiritual Background

The student must consider the two contrasting avenues of the background of Numbers. At this point Israel were a people who had known:

- a) Redemption by blood (Ex. 12) and therefore freed from the world of enslavement (Ex. 12; Rom. 6; Gal. 6).
- b) Deliverance from the re-enslaving power of Egypt (Ex. 15).
- c) The holy privilege of giving to the Lord (Ex. 25) and building the dwelling place of God, the Sanctuary (Ex. 25:8).
- d) The communications from the LORD through Moses on life's principles regarding restoring fellowship with God due to human sin (Lev. 1-8), having priests which represented man before God (Ex. and Lev.), and regarding social life (Lev.). However, in sharp contrast they were a people who had been and now were idolators. They were such:
 - i) In Egypt (Ezek. 20:3-8)
 - ii) In the wilderness and that is where they are in the recordings of Numbers (Ezek. 20:9-26; Num. 1:1, 19; 33:36).
 1. Thus, two unseen powers were competing for their loyalty, God and Satan, life and death, liberty and enslavement. God's communications always has the two elements of correction and purification.

Numbers is a book of transition, and such are always matters for concern. If the transition is from God it is always good. For instance:

- a) "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17). That was a

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transition.

- b) In leaving the Jews and the proclamation of the Gospel and going to the Gentiles, that was a transition.

When man makes a transition it is always bad. For instance:

- a) When the Israelites wanted a king and changed from a theocracy to a monarchy, that was a transition.
- b) Numbers deals with a transition for the generation at the end of the book. It is not the same as the one at the beginning. There are two distinct generations, the first was the people of God who came out of Egypt but did not get going into the promised land due to sin (ch. 1:1-25:18). The second generation was their children of the first generation who did enter the land (ch. 26:1-36:13).

START READING

The important questions in any transition are:

- a) "Why was the transition necessary?"
- b) "Was it an act of man's defiance, God purposes, or God's discipline?"
- c) "What were the results of the transition?"

Numbers is a sad book for it records times when they rebelled against God and or His servants Moses and Aaron. The LORD had to discipline them (Num. 11:1-3; 11:4; 14:1; 16:41; 21:6; 25:4). The tragedy is that in the first situation it was not the young people who were rebellious which stopped them from going into the promised land, but was the older generation who had seen God's wonderful works in Egypt and at the Red sea. It was they of whom it was written, "they believed not" (Psa. 106:24; Heb. 4:2) and their "carcasses fell in the wilderness" (Heb. 3:17).

Their duration in the wilderness was divided into two sections:

- a) When they journeyed in fellowship with God from Egypt to Sinai.
- b) From Sinai to Kadesh when they wandered in the wilderness.

The first journey was God's plan, the second was God's discipline. How sad when individuals begin well and end poorly. Such was Demas, and the Galatians were in danger of following the same ending (Gal. 5:7). Yet in this book we learn the mercy of God in the provision for their daily needs. With approximately two million people which, if we give as rounded off figures, the population is the same as Toronto, Huston, and Phoenix; the food requirements have been calculated to be the equivalent of needing 50 railroad cars of food and 12 million gallons of water per day for the congregation!

The Historical Chronological and God's Encampments

In reading the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, it is easy to miss the chronological order, durations, and the closeness chronologically of one book to the others. The following is a table of such. However, due to us not living at the time of the exodus to Canaan journey, the names of places and the distances between them mean little. There are places we have no idea where they specifically were and therefore, what I have tried to do is take the major places and when possible, fit the other areas or cities into where it seems to me they were. Some places I do not even mention since I cannot find any maps to show them.

Date dd/mth/yr	Place	Event	Reference
14 01 01	Egypt	Passover	Ex. 12:27
15 01 01	Leave Rameses for Succoth		Ex. 12:37

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Date dd/mth/yr	Place	Event	Reference	
In this one month's duration they traveled from Rameses to the entrance to the Wilderness of Sin	To Etham		Ex. 13:20	
	To Pi-hahiroth		Ex. 14:2	
	To Red Sea		Ex. 14:2	
	Wilderness of Shur		Ex. 15:22	
	Marah		Ex. 15:23	
	Elim		Ex. 15:27	
15 02 01	Wilderness of Sin		Ex. 16:1	
	Dophkah		Num. 33:12	
	Alush		Num. 33:13	
One month duration	Rephidim	No water to drink	Ex. 17:1	
15 03 01	Wilderness of Sinai		Ex. 19:1	
Approx. 9 months				
01 01 02		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabernacle set up • Dedication of the altar, 1st day 	Ex. 40:17 Num. 7:1	
12 01 02		Dedication of altar, 12th day	Num. 7:78	
?? 01 02		Command to keep the Passover	Num. 9:1-2	
14 01 02		Keep the Passover	Num. 9:6	
		The LORD speaks with Moses from the Tabernacle concerning offerings, etc.	Lev. 1:1	
01 02 02		The LORD speaks with Moses in the Tabernacle concerning the camp	Num. 1:1	
		At Sinai	Num. 1:2-10:11	
20 02 02		Out of the wilderness of Sinai	Num. 10:12	
		Taberah	The complaining of the people, despising the manna	Num. 11:1-15

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Date dd/mth/yr	Place	Event	Reference
		70 men who became assistants to Moses	Num. 11:16-30
		The people complain and the Lord sends quails and then judgment	Num. 11:31-34
	Kibroth-hattaavah		Num. 11:35
	Hazereth		Num. 11:35
		Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses wife, and Miriam smitten with leprosy	Num. 12:1-15
	Rithmah		Num. 33:18
	Rimmon-parez		Num. 33:19
		They move and pitch in Paran	Num. 12:16
Approx. 18 days duration	To wilderness of Paran		Num. 10:12
		Sent to search out the land and apart from Caleb and Joshua come back with an evil report	Num. 13:3-33
		The complaining against God and Moses and readiness to stone Caleb and Joshua	Num. 14:1-9
		The Lord threatens to destroy Israel, Moses intercedes and the judgment of God will be not allowing any of them to enter the promised land	Num. 14:10-45
Approx. 38 years		The beginning of wandering in the wilderness	Num. 14:32
		Various injunctions when they come into the land	Num. 15:1-41
		The rebellion of Korah, the judgment of God, the rebellion of the people, and a plague sent by God	Num. 16:1-50

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Date dd/mth/yr	Place	Event	Reference
		The determining of Aaron as God's appointed priest with their responsibilities and blessings	Num. 17:1-18:32
		The red heifer for cleansing	Num. 19:1-22
?? 01 40	Desert of Zin		Num. 20:1
	Kadesh	Miriam dies	Num. 20:1
	Mount Hor, by the coast of Edom		Num. 20:22
		Aaron dies	Num. 20:26
	Hormah	The serpents whose bite killed	Num. 21:3
	Oboth		Num. 21:10
	Ije-abarim		Num. 21:11
	Valley of Zared		Num. 21:12
	Other side of Arnon		Num. 21:13
	Mattanah		Num. 21:18
	Nahaliel		Num. 21:19
	Bamoth in Moab		Num. 21:20
	Top of Pisgah		Num. 21:20
	Land of the Amorites		Num. 21:31
	Plains of Moab		Num. 22:1
		Balaam and Balak	Num. 22:5-24:24
	Shittim	Committed whoredom	Num. 25:1
		Re-numbering and see the details in the next section.	

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A Detailed Account From The Start of The Wilderness Journeys Until The Promised Land (ch. 10:11- Josh. 1:2)

The time when the children of Israel actually began the wanderings is not explicitly specified in Numbers. It is easy to miss the gap between chs. 19-20.

Chapter 10:11 on the 20th of the 2nd month in the 2nd year the cloud was taken off the Tabernacle and they began the onward journey to the promised land.

- 1) Coming into the Wilderness of Paran (ch. 10:12) and journeyed to Kibroth-hattaavah.
 - a) (the events of ch. 11:1-33 happened at Kibroth-hattaavah for the plague resulted in death and burials, ch. 11:34).
- 2) Then they journeyed to Hazeroth where they camped (ch. 11:35)
- 3) They then move from Hazeroth to Paran and camped at Kadesh (ch. 12:16; 13:26)
 - a) From Kadesh spies were sent out to spy the land (ch. 13:1-24)
 - b) The spies return from Canaan with the two opposing reports (ch. 13:25-33)
 - c) The people cried about dying in the wilderness (ch. 14:1-5, the call to return to Egypt, to make a new captain and a readiness to stone Moses and Aaron (ch. 14:1-21)
 - i) God's judgment pronounced,
 1. These people will not see the promised land
 2. Their carcasses shall fall in the wilderness
 3. They will not come into the promised land
 4. Their children will enter it
 5. There will be a wandering in the wilderness for 40 years (ch. 14:22-37). The next day they were to, "Turn and get into the wilderness by way of the Red Sea" (ch. 14:25). This was the turning point when they no longer moved toward the Promised Land.
 6. The people mourned and said they would get up and go the next day, but it was too late. Even though they were warned, they went up but not with Moses or the ark (ch. 14:39-45).
- 4) The turn begins and with it the wandering begins therefore, this is all going back away from the Promised Land.
 - a) Lets them know what to do when they come into the land (ch. 15:1, 18:31)
 - b) The man gathering sticks and the LORD's ruling (ch. 15:32-41)
 - c) The rebellion by Korah and the LORD's judgment (ch. 16:1-35)
 - d) The making of the copper plates for the altar (ch. 16:36-40)
 - e) The rebellion against Moses and Aaron, against the LORD's judgment on Korah, and a plague sent among the people, 14,700 died (ch. 16:41-50)
 - f) The LORD's endorsement as to who would be His priest (ch. 17:1-11)
 - g) The people murmur again (ch. 17:12-13)
 - h) The LORD's commands to Moses and Aaron (ch. 18:1-19)
 - i) The LORD speaks to Aaron (ch. 18:20-24)
 - j) The LORD speaks to Moses concerning the Levites (ch. 18:25-32)
 - k) The LORD speaks to Moses and Aaron (ch. 19:22)
- 5) They are back to Kadesh and the 38 years are almost over (ch. 20:1)
 - a) Arad the Canaanite comes against Israel and when they prayed to the LORD for deliverance, He delivered them (ch. 21:1-3)
- 6) They come to Mount Hor by the Red Sea to circle the land of Edom (ch. 20:22)
 - a) They spoke against Moses and the manna God sent, so the LORD sent fiery serpents and many died. The LORD instructs Moses to make a serpent of brass which, when an individual looked at it, he lived (ch. 21:5-9)
- 7) They arrive in Oboth (ch. 21:10)

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- 8) They moved from Oboth and pitched in Ije-abarim in the wilderness before Moab (ch. 21:11)
- 9) Then moved to the Valley of Zared (ch. 21:12)
- 10) Then to the other side of the river Arnon, which is the border between Moab and the Amorites, which is wilderness (ch. 21:13)
- 11) To Mattanah (ch. 21:18)
- 12) To Nahaliel (ch. 21:19)
- 13) To Bamoth (ch. 21:19) which is in the country of Moab
- 14) To the top of Pisgah which looks toward Jeshimon which is the wilderness (ch. 21:20)
 - a) Messengers sent to Sihon, king of the Amorites, for permission to pass through the land, which was refused, and Sihon went to war with Israel, but the Lord being with Israel, the Amorites were defeated even to the border of Ammon. Israel took their cities and dwelt in them (ch. 21:21-33)
 - b) Israel turned and went toward Bashan and Og, the king fought against them but the LORD delivered them also into the hand of Israel (ch. 21:33-35)
- 15) They pitched in the plains of Moab on this side of Jordan by Jericho
 - a) The concerns of Balak and the inhabitants of Moab so he called for Balaam to come and curse Israel, but instead Balaam blessed them (ch. 22:1-24:25)
- 16) Israel abode at Shittim and the children of Israel committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and sacrificed to their gods, joining themselves to Baal-peor (ch. 25:1-3)
 - a) The LORD was angry and Moses was told to hang the heads of the leadership of the wickedness so that the anger of the Lord would be turned away (ch. 25:4).
 - b) A man of Israel took a woman of Midian into a tent in blatancy against Moses and the manifested judgment of the LORD, Phinehas slew them both and the plague the LORD had sent stopped, but not before 24,000 were slain by it (ch. 25:6-9; 14-15)
 - c) Phinehas was zealous for the Lord and God gave to him and his seed the covenant of peace (ch. 25:11-13)
 - d) Moses was commanded to vex the Midianites (ch. 25:17)
 - e) Moses was told:
 - i) To number the people which totaled 601,730 (ch. 26:1-51)
 - ii) How the land was to be divided (ch. 26:52-56)
 - iii) The family of the Levites (ch. 26:57-63)
 - iv) The only ones of the original generation who went into the land (ch. 26:65)
 - v) The daughters of Zelophehad and their concerns were similar to the man who gathered sticks, the matter was taken to the Lord for wisdom as to what to do (ch. 27:1-11)
 - vi) The offerings which were to be offered (ch. 28:1-29:40)
 - vii) Concerning vows (ch. 30:1-16)
 - viii) Moses was told by the LORD to go to war against the Midianites and how many were to do the warring (ch. 31:1-12). They brought the conquered Midianite women to Aaron and Moses in the plains of Moab, Moses was angry at them sparing the lives of these women because these were the ones who had caused the trouble at Baal-peor (ch. 31:17), but they were not to kill the virgins (ch. 31:18).
 - ix) The cleaning of men and materials and what was to be given to the Levites (ch. 31:19-54).
 - x) The situation of Reuben and Gad and their cattle (ch. 32:1-42)
 - xi) The recounting of the journey from Rameses to the plains of Moab (ch. 33:1-49), including places not before mentioned and data concerning Aaron not mentioned before (ch. 33:38-38).
 - xii) The LORD speaks to Moses telling him to instruct the children of Israel what they must do to the inhabitants of the land of Canaan (ch. 33:50) and the warnings if they do not as they are told (ch. 33:51-56).
 - xiii) The division of the land (ch. 34:2-29)
 - xiv) The portion of the Levites (ch. 35:1-6; 7-8)
 - xv) The cities of refuge for the manslayer (ch. 35:6, 9-29) but not for a murderer (ch. 35:30-34)
 - xvi) The children of Gilead come to Moses bringing up the matter of the daughters of Zelophehad (ch. 36:1-13)

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xvii)Deuteronomy begins by:

1. Specifying precisely where they were, “This side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red Sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab” (Deut. 1:1)
2. The date, “the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel” (Deut. 1:3). In His message he recalls for them the grace of God through the years, the laws to be kept.
3. Moses died and they mourned for him thirty days, and after that the LORD spoke to Joshua telling him to “arise, go over this Jordan” (Josh. 1:2)

The Author of Numbers

There can be no doubt that Moses was the human author of the book. God or the LORD spoke constantly through Moses, for while God was the source of the communication, Moses was the messenger, just as Tertius was for Paul (Rom. 16:22). Therefore, to show the relationship of Moses to God and the authority with which he spoke, it is recorded, “The LORD spake unto Moses” which occurs 55 times (ch. 1:1); “And God said” occurs once (ch. 22:12); and “The Lord said unto Moses” occurs 19 times (ch. 3:40).

Title

According to Hebrew custom, a book received its name from the first words, and the first five were called “Wayyedabber” which means, “And he said”. The desire of the translators of the Septuagint was to give each of the first five books a name which would indicate its contents. Thus, the fourth book was called “Arithmoi”, then the western church adopted this in its Latinized form calling it “Arithmi”, which was later changed to “Numeri”. The Syrian church called it, “The Book of Numbers”. Later, because its opening phrase was the same as Deuteronomy, it was given the more appropriate name of, “In the Desert”. However, when reading the book, if I had to name it according to its themes, it would be called, “Israel’s Disciplinary Wanderings in The Wildernesses”. I say “disciplinary” because from chapter 10 to 36 there is very little narrative or legislation but recounting of God’s discipline on them. Wanderings because of disobedience in not going into the Promised Land, and the judgment was for them to spend 40 years in the wilderness, with 38 of them actually wandering. “In the wildernesses” (plural for they were in the wilderness of Shur, Sin, Sinai, Paran, and Zin)

It is only in chapters 1-4 and 26 there are numberings, but the book deals with journeyings of Israel in the wilderness. Consequently, from this perspective, the book is in three broad sections:

- a) Preparation for the onward journey, out of Sinai to the promised inheritance (chs. 1:1-10:36)
- b) Disruption of the journey (ch. 11:1-19:22)
- c) Resumption of the journey under a new generation (ch. 20:1-36:33)

Numbers and The New Testament

It is well known that the Lord quoted Deuteronomy in the temptations, and the New Testament has many quotations from Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus, however, quotations and allusions from Numbers are harder to find. The quotations and allusion types I can find are:

Numbers	Allusion
Num. 9:12	Jn. 19:36
Num. 12:7	Heb. 3:5
Num. 16:5	2 Tim. 2:19

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Numbers	Allusion
Num. 22:40	2 Pet. 2:15
Num. 22:28-30	2 Pet. 2:16
Num. 31:16	Rev. 2:14

Keys

- 1) Key verse:
 - a) It is my understanding that the verse which carries the thematic concepts of Numbers is: “The LORD is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation” (Num. 14:18)
- 2) Key concepts:
 - a) The pathway to the inheritance is through a waste howling wilderness in which we learn that the God led life is a warfare, and unbelief hinders entrance into that inheritance. Man is redeemed and delivered to serve in the place and way God sees fit.
- 3) Keywords:
 - a) War, which occurs 33 times
 - b) Work, which occurs 10 times
 - c) Murmur/murmured which occurs 7 times
 - i) They complained about the way the LORD led (ch. 11:1); the food he gave (ch. 11:1-9); the woman Moses married (ch. 12:1-16); the leaders the LORD set over them (ch. 16:1-17:13); the land he promised them (ch. 13:28-33); and the verdict he pronounced on them (ch. 14:1-3).
 - d) Service, which occurs 47 times

God

Numbers very much focuses on the attributes and characteristics of God, for in it there is emphasized His:

- 1) Power
 - a) In bringing them out of Egypt (Num. 8:17; 15:41; 23:22; 24:8)
 - b) In giving victory over those who opposed them, Om (Num. 32:33), Sihon (Num. 21:23).
- 2) Provision
 - a) In the manna (Num. 11:7)
 - b) In the water from the rock (Num. 20:2, 5, 8, 10, 11; 21:16)
 - c) In the quails (Num. 11:31-32)
- 3) Patience
 - a) Despite their tempting of Him ten times (Num. 14:22).
 - i) It is a matter of discussion if the children of Israel tempted the Lord a total of 10 times or 10 times to the point when He said this. I will give the list as I understand them and the reader can decide for themselves:
 - (a) Ex. 14:11-12. This was a murmuring due to fear (ch. 14:10, 13) for they knew the viciousness of the Egyptians. The passage will show that they cried out to the Lord but heaven was silent (v. 10). God graciously understood their fear and attitude and they were not disciplined for it.

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They had been redeemed but had not learnt the reality of deliverance which would come at the Red Sea.

- (b) Ex. 15:23-24. This was a murmuring and tempting of God due to understandable concern and need. When one is in the desert with the heat and many animals, water is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Therefore, when they came to Marah and the water was bitter, it was exceedingly disappointing and after three days it was very serious (vv. 22-23). Once again, there was no disciplinary action.
- (c) Ex. 16:2-3. Tempting God again by doubting His ability and truthfulness. Their cry was because they had nothing to eat, and being in the wilderness, could see no hope of food. Like most humans, they looked on the darkest, possibly, “We are going to die in the wilderness”. In other words, God cannot bring us to the promised land no matter what He promised. God graciously gave them quails in the evening and manna in the morning, but still did not send judgment.
- (d) Ex. 16:19-20. This was much more serious than the first murmurings. This was not only doubting God but also being disobedient, yet again there was no chastisement.
- (e) Ex. 17:1. Once again the Lord led His people into the Wilderness of Sin, and again there was no water. Venting their anger against Moses they chided with him saying, “Give us water that we may drink” (Ex. 17:2). Moses recognized that this was a murmuring against God, asking them, “Wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?” (v. 2). This was also a manifestation of their innermost being for they had expected because God was with them all would flow smoothly, therefore, they ask, “Is the Lord among us, or not?” (v. 7). Moses was commanded by God to smite the rock and water was supplied in abundance.
- (f) Ex. 32:2-6. For the first time it is recorded that the anger of the Lord was hot against the redeemed people (v.10). Because Moses had not returned when they expected him, and knowing Aaron was not the man Moses was, they made a golden calf and declared it to be their god which brought them out of Egypt, and to add insult to injury, Aaron made an altar and declared the next day to be a feast day. What wickedness abounded and God was furious. The discipline was going to be so severe that God was ready to cease Israel from existing (v. 10). Moses then interceded but more was to be needed. Therefore, Moses called for those who were faithful to God to come over to his side and then commanded them to slay the idolaters, consequently, some three thousand were slain that day (v. 28). That still was not sufficient so God pledged to plague the people in a future day (vv. 34-35). They accepted the deception that he never would return (ch. 32:1). They failed to see the greatness of God’s purposes for them, the building of the Tabernacle (ch. 24-31). They failed to see that which Moses would do for them (ch. 32:11). They made their own gods. They reverted to idolatry, the very thing they had been guilty of in Egypt (Ezek. 20:5, 9). God was ready to destroy them (vv. 9-10), they had gone too far, God’s anger was fierce.
- (g) Num. 11:1-3. This was very solemn for some 38 years of wandering had taken place, forty years had been spend in the wilderness, it was a new generation and once again God begins conducting them to the promised land. What the complaining was we are not told, but it is a different word from the word translated “murmur”, and this word means to mourn as something lost. This time there is no grace or mercy, only direct judgment for increased knowledge of God meant increased chastisement. How frightening to read that the fire of God burnt among them and consumed them. It was a vicious consuming fire and there was no throne of grace. They were cremated alive.

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- (h) Num. 11:4. The “mixt multitude”, what does this refer to, the Egyptians or the Israelites? I take it refers to the Egyptians who also came out of Egypt, but the next clause expands it to the Israelites who apparently were still alive from the first generation for they remembered the foods of Egypt (vv. 4-6). God gave them food to eat, not for one day, nor two, nor five nor ten, nor twenty, but for an entire month until it, “come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you” (v. 20). Then God smote them with a very great plague for His anger was against them so that death resulted (v. 33).
- (i) Num. 12:1. While this was not a murmuring of the entire congregation, it was against Moses and God’s appointment of him as the one He would speak through. The anger of the Lord was against them so that Miriam became a leper (v. 10). Aaron, in the confession of sin and the intimation, is an asking for Moses to pray for her. It was a limited discipline for she was put out of the camp for seven days and the progress of the entire camp was stayed due to their sin and the waiting for Miriam (vv. 14-16).
- (j) Num. 14:1-3. This is not in chronological order for they are in the Wilderness of Paran, but it is a recounting of the continuous attitude of Israel against the plans of God, of an incident which happened at the beginning of the journey. It is at this time it is recorded that they have tempted the Lord ten times (v. 22).
- (k) Num. 16:1-3. These men had not learnt the seriousness of rebelling against the Lord’s appointed one. Miriam and Aaron had done so and there were consequences. However, this time it was much more serious for it was not only Korah and his immediate associates, but also two hundred and fifty of the princes of Israel (v. 2). This sort of rebellion must not be allowed to continue and after God had shown by the budding of Aaron’s rod who His appointed priest was, the judgment of God fell on Korah when the earth opened up (vv. 30-34), and fire came down and consumed them.
- (l) Num. 16:41-50. Sadly the people did not learn the lesson of futility in fighting God, for the next day they came and accused Moses of killing the people of the LORD (v. 41). They sided with error and rebellion against God. The the judgment of God came and a plague began to sweep among the people so that fourteen thousand seven hundred died, despite atonement having been made (v. 47).
- (m) Num. 20:1-5. Let us not forget this was the new generation, the children of that first generation, and now they also rebel against Moses and Aaron because there was nothing there in the wilderness, no seed, figs, vines, pomegranates, or water and it was to them an evil place (v. 5). The LORD told Moses to speak to the rock (v. 8) but Moses, for whatever reason, called the children of Israel “rebels” (v. 10) and instead of speaking to the rock, he smote it twice (v. 11). This time the judgment of the LORD would fall on Moses (vv. 12, 24).
- (n) Num. 21:6. Once again there was rebellion due to lack of water and bread and their cry was, “Our soul loatheth this light bread” (v. 5). The LORD had had sufficient and sent fiery serpents among them and when they bit the individuals, the result was death. Again the people asked Moses to pray for them as they confessed their sins, and Moses was told to make a fiery serpent and put it on a pole, and all who looked upon it would live (v. 8).
- (o) Num. 25:9. The rebellion now was that of being joined to fornication and joining in the sacrifices to the Moabitish gods (vv. 1-2). Once again the anger of the Lord was against the leaders of Israel, and the judges of Israel were told to slay all those men who were joined to Baal-peor. That was only part of the judgment. God also sent a plague which ultimately killed twenty four thousand. This was stopped after a man of Israel in insolent brazenness

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brought a Midianite woman into the sight of Moses and the people wherein Phinehas went into the tent after them and slew them both.

- 4) Perspective of them
 - a) This is seen in how God caused Balaam to speak of them (Num. 24:5-9, 15-24)
- 5) Purity and holiness
 - a) In the repetition of people not to come into the camp or come near the Tabernacle, the sanctification of the priests and Levites (Num. 8:6-14).

Some Distinctions Between Leviticus and Numbers

Numbers is the development of the history of Israel at Sinai (Ex. 19:3-Num. 10:10), which had three major happenings:

- a) The manifestation of Jehovah (Ex. 19:3-25)
- b) The established principles of government (Ex. 20:1-Lev. 27:34)
- c) The preparation for the onward journey (Num. 1:1-10:10)

These events in this period of almost a year bind Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers together, therefore:

- a) Exodus will tell of God's approaching man (Ex. 3:8); Leviticus will tell of man's approaching God (Lev. 1:1); Exodus stresses God's activity and power (Ex. 3:8, 12); and Leviticus stresses His communications and holiness.
- b) Likewise, in Leviticus it deals with purity; Numbers is taken up with pilgrimage; Leviticus informs man how to maintain fellowship with God; whereas Numbers is a call to faithfulness and fellowship with God.

Structure

From the moment of redemption the children of Israel began the onward journey toward the land of their inheritance. This meant a new environment of liberty, but that did not mean them doing as they wanted for the God who redeemed and delivered them now instructed them how to live socially and religiously. They were not at liberty to do as they reasoned or to interpret God's statutes and judgments as they saw fit. These judgments and statutes are found in Leviticus, and they were given as lessons to be learnt before their onward journey to the promised land. Having given them truths concerning right living, God in Numbers begins to prepare them for the journey which lay ahead.

- a) The angel did the same thing to Elijah when he fed him with food enough to last many days and the journey he was to undertake (1 Kgs. 19:7-8).
- b) The Lord did the same with the disciples in the upper room in preparing them for the life journey which lay ahead of them (Jn. 13-17).

Practical Lessons

- 1) The history of Israel.
- 2) The ongoing experiences of a believer as they walk this desert
 - a) The helps for guidance
 - b) The dangers of rebellion
 - c) Ultimate victory and crossing into our inheritance.
- 3) Ch. 1-10 - The importance of the journey and the great importance of preparation for it.
- 4) The most temptations and failures did not come from the enemy outside, but from the flesh within. It was the inside which yearned for the garlic, etc., and was dissatisfied or jealous of things, not Og or Sihon. It was

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things I had experienced or tasted, things which made my appetite yearn for which all found their source in Egypt, a world totally ruled by one who stood in opposition to the unrestricted Lordship of God and of Christ.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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