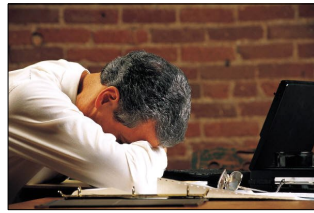


Numbers: Missing God's Best

- Do you sometimes feel like you are wandering aimlessly through life without direction and purpose?



The book of Numbers teaches us that God wants to bless our lives, **but we can miss His best through indifference, disobedience, and unbelief.** In the book of Numbers, we see Israel *failing to trust God* for their provision of food by complaining & grumbling (Chapter 11). In addition, God promised to give them their own country—a Promised Land—but Israel *refused to enter the land* (Chapter 13). They *did not trust God* even though they saw His great power with the plagues that brought them out of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, the destruction of the Egyptian army, the miraculous provision of food in the wilderness, and water from the rock.

Israel had **every reason to trust God** to give them the Promised Land. However, they disbelieved God's promise and disobeyed God's command to possess the land. As a result, God judged that generation and made them live the rest of their lives wandering in the wilderness, going in circles. **They missed God's best. Many people today are missing God's best for the same reasons.** The Book of Numbers has a message vital for people today.

Central Lesson: Faith and Obedience Leads to God's Best.

Title: The name "Numbers" is based on two occasions of taking a census of the two *numberings* of Israel (chapters 1 and 26). The original Hebrew name, "*In the Wilderness*," was taken from verse one. The name "Numbers" comes from the Septuagint (the Old Testament translated into Greek from the 3rd century B.C.).

Author: MOSES. More than 80 times, the Book of Numbers states that "the Lord spoke to Moses."

Date: 1450-1410 B.C.

Key Verses: Numbers 14:34. Also 14:22-23; 20:12.

Key Chapters: Numbers 14. This chapter was the critical turning point for Israel because they refused to take possession of the Promised Land.

Theme: The key theme of Numbers is **MISSING God's Best As a Result of Disbelief and Disobedience.** Someone has written: "*It took God only a few days to get Israel out of Egypt, but it took Him 40 years to get Egypt out of Israel.*" What about us? How long is it taking the Lord to get today's sinful world out of us? The answer depends upon our level of resistance vs. submission to God's sanctifying work.

One Bible Teacher observes: "An interesting fact to note is that the nation Israel did not grow during its wilderness wanderings. In fact, they declined in number by almost 2,000 men of war. Thus, they wasted 38 years, suffered unnecessary afflictions, and did not grow numerically. This is what unbelief does to the Christian; it produces wasted time, wasted effort, and spiritual stalemate." Tommy C. Hagle, *Journey Through The Bible*, p.19.

Outline:

- I. The **OLD** Generation (Chapters 1-14)
- II. The Wandering in the Wilderness (Chapters 15-20)
- III. The **NEW** Generation (Chapters 21-36)

Major Events in Leviticus & Pictures of Christ:

1. **Census**—counting the number of men able to go to war (Chapter 1).
2. **Tribal Arrangement**—assigning the placement of the Twelve Tribes of Israel around the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was the center of the Israelites' life. God must be the center of our lives! What does your life center around? (Chapters 2-4).
3. **Commandments**—laws are given from God concerning: lepers (chapter 5:1-4); testing marital fidelity (5:5-31); Nazirite vows (6); offerings for the dedication of the altar (7); setting apart and preparing the Levites (8); the First Passover (9:1-14); summoning the people with trumpets to indicate the time for travel (9:15-10:10).
4. **Murmurings & God's Judgment**—Israel complained against God about their hardships. God judged them by consuming them with fire until they cried out to Moses. Others began murmuring about not having the food that they ate in Egypt. They wanted meat in addition to the manna. God sent an abundance of quail (Chapter 11). Also, Miriam & Aaron murmur against Moses & are judged by God (Chapter 12).
5. **The TWELVE Spies**—the twelve spies explore the Promised Land (Chapters 13-14).
6. **Challenging Moses and Aaron's Leadership**—Korah led Israel to revolt against Moses and Aaron, and God judged the people by the earth opening up and swallowing them alive. God also judged the people for grumbling against Moses & Aaron (Chapters 16-17).
7. **The SIN of Moses**—Moses struck the rock to miraculously provide water for Israel instead of speaking to the rock as God had commanded. Moses cannot enter the Promised Land (Chapter 20:1-13).
8. **Aaron's Death**—Aaron died due to his rebellion at the waters of Meribah (Chapter 20:23-29).
9. **The Bronze Serpent**—venomous snakes bit the people of Israel for speaking against the Lord. Moses held up a bronze serpent, saving anyone who saw it (Chapter 21).
10. **Joshua Appointed to Succeed Moses**—Moses asked God to appoint a leader to take Israel into the Promised Land (27:12-23).
11. **Canaan DIVIDED**—the land of Canaan was divided among the Tribes of Israel (Chapters 34-36).

Christ in Numbers: Christ is seen in several **types** according to the New Testament: (1) **The bronze serpent on the pole** (Numbers 21:4-9) pictures Christ on the cross (John 3:14). (2) **The daily manna** (Number 11:9) pictures Jesus as the Bread of Life who gives life to the world (John 6:31-35). (3) **The rock that quenches the thirst** of the multitudes (Numbers 20:11) pictures Jesus quenching man's spiritual thirst (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

Central Lesson: Faith and Obedience Leads to God's Best.

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week ► Pray for friends that need Jesus..