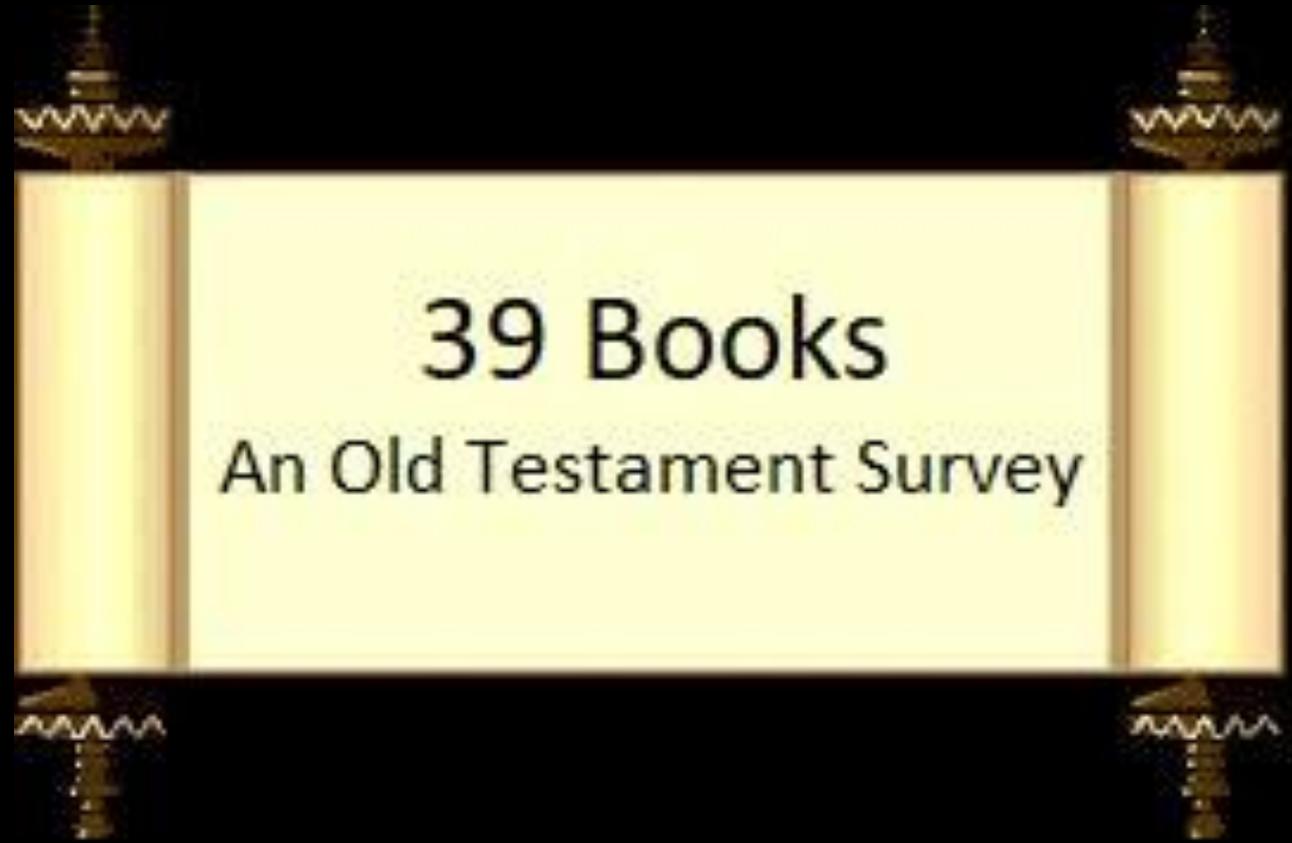


Numbers

In the Wilderness



39 Books An Old Testament Survey

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- The first five books of the Bible make a set, variously called,
- *The Pentateuch* – Greek for “Five Books”
- *The Torah* – Hebrew for “Law” or “Instruction”
- *The Five Books of Moses* – Moses is the traditional author.

The Pentateuch or Torah

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1. Genesis – The Book of Origins
2. Exodus – Leaving Egypt
3. Leviticus – Worship and Walk
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

The Pentateuch or Torah

1. Genesis – The Book of Origins
2. Exodus – Leaving Egypt
3. Leviticus – Worship and Walk
4. **Numbers** – In the Wilderness
5. Deuteronomy

Numbers In the Wilderness

Numbers In the Wilderness

- **Numbers** takes its title from the lengthy census figures in **Chapters 1-3 & 26**.
- The Hebrew title, *In the Wilderness*, is from the first verse.
- Most of the book's contents come from Israel's 40 years of wilderness wandering.
- The word "**wilderness**" appears 45 times in this book.

Numbers In the Wilderness



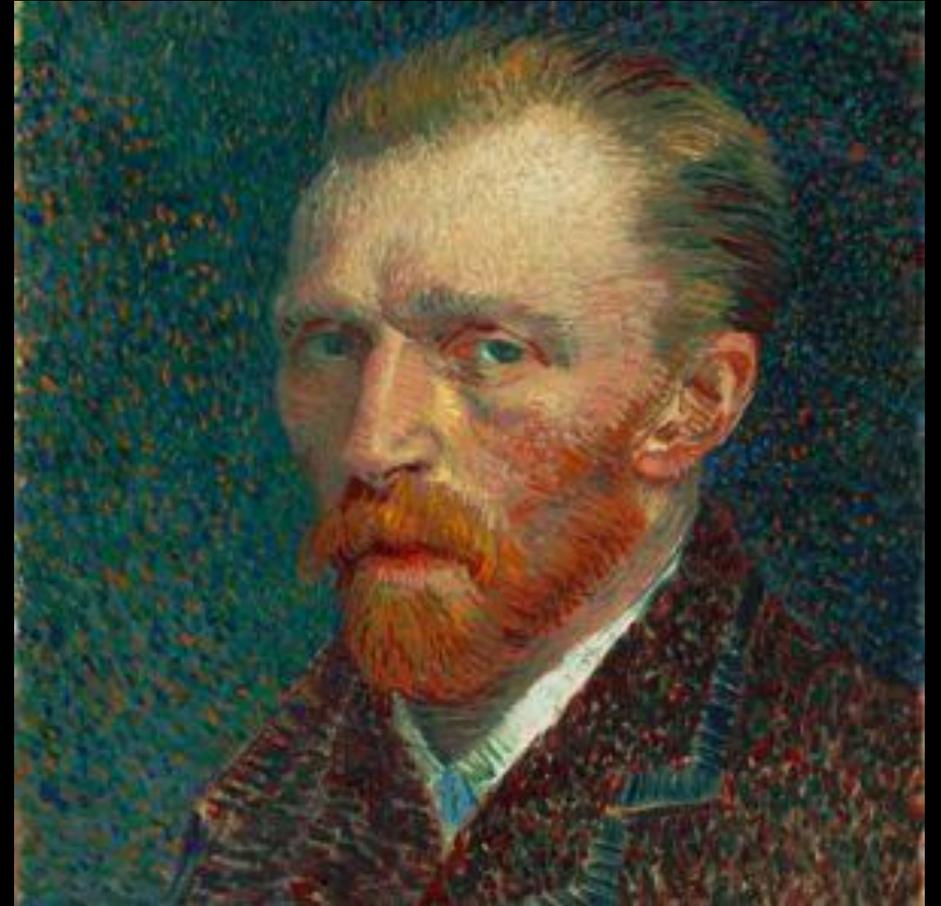
The principle lesson of Numbers is that God's people must walk by faith, trusting His promises, if they are to move forward.

*– Charles Ryrie (1925 – 2016),
Dallas Theological Seminary*

Numbers In the Wilderness

The fishermen know that the sea is dangerous and the storm terrible, but they have never found these dangers sufficient reason for remaining ashore.

– Vincent van Gogh (1925 – 2016)



Numbers Key Concept: Walking by Faith

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- As we walk by faith, God leads us through the place of testing **into the place of blessing**, by belief and trust in Him.
- Some form of “**wilderness experience**” is normal.
- It just isn't meant to be permanent.

Numbers Key Concept: Walking by Faith

- As we walk by faith, God leads us through the place of testing **into the place of blessing**, by belief and trust in Him.
- Some form of “**wilderness experience**” is normal.
- It just isn't meant to be permanent.
- **More on that shortly.**

Numbers Important Passages

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- The Nazirite vow appears in Chapter 6.
- The unique Red Heifer sacrifice is in Chapter 19.
- The six Cities of Refuge are explained in Chapter 35.

Numbers Important Passages

- There are several examples of **rebellion** against God's chosen leaders. (**14:2, 16:2, 16:41, 20:2, 21:4**)
- **Numbers 20** records God's refusal to let Moses enter the Land and the deaths of both Miriam and Aaron.

Numbers Important Passages

- God's chooses **Joshua** to succeed Moses (**27:18-23**),
- He will lead the people into the Promised Land.
- **Joshua** is an OT parallel of the NT name **Jesus**, who also succeeds Moses but in a more profound way.

Numbers Important Passages

- Three different New Testament authors (Peter, Jude and John) mention the sin of **Balaam** (**Chapters 22-25**).
- The New Testament repeatedly uses events from **Numbers** to warn us of the consequences of sin and unbelief.
- See **1 Corinthians 10**, **1 Peter 2** and **Jude**.

Numbers Important Passages

- Jesus compares his own hanging on the cross to the brass serpent of **Chapter 21**.
- It is one of the clearest Old Testament pictures of people being saved by faith. (See **John 3:14**)

Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- This is the story of the spies.

Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- This is really one of the more tragic stories in the Bible, but there is a lot that we can learn from it.

Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- We are reminded that in the walk of faith, it is essential to trust God's word.
- Remember God's promise to Abraham.

Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- **Genesis 15:13-16** (ESV)

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- In the walk of faith, God will take us on to new and different things that all fall within the scope of his plan.

Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- Consider this preview from **Deuteronomy 11:8-12** (ESV)

⁸ “You shall therefore keep the whole commandment that I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and take possession of the land that you are going over to possess, ⁹ and that you may live long in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give to them and to their offspring, a land flowing with milk and honey ...

Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- Deuteronomy 11:8-12 (ESV) continued

¹⁰ For the land that you are entering to take possession of it is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated it, like a garden of vegetables. ¹¹ But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, ¹² a land that the LORD your God cares for. The eyes of the LORD your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- Egypt was not much like Canaan.
- The trials under bondage were different from the tests of obedience the people faced in a land of their own.

Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- Is the right response to want to go back as the ten spies wanted to do? (See 14:1-4)
- Or is it to move forward boldly as Joshua and Caleb argued? (See 14:5-9)

Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- The Christian life is not meant to be a life of stagnant sameness.
- Faithfulness in our calling will repeatedly lead to new tests of faith and new experiences under new circumstances.

Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- Further, as the culture around us changes rapidly we have to learn to adapt.
- Our faithfulness to God's word will look different as we encounter and engage with a rapidly changing culture.

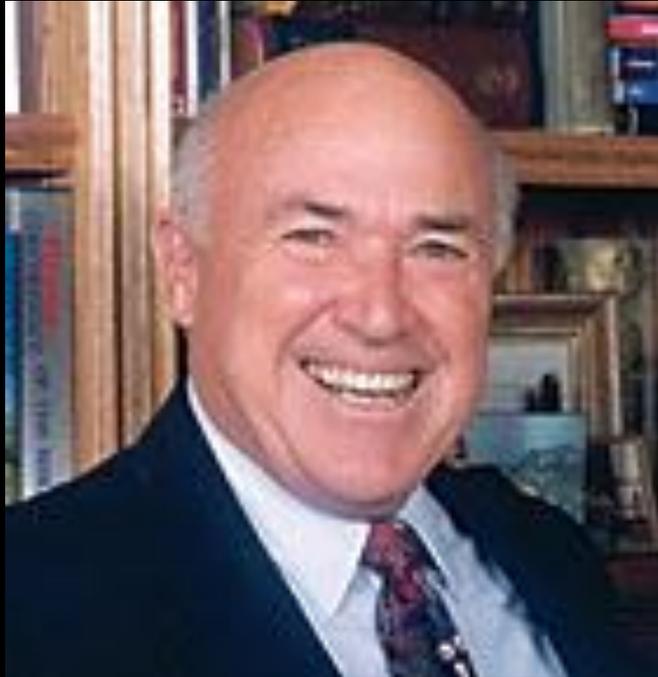
Key Chapters Numbers 13 – 14

- Do not imagine we can ever return to “the good old days.”
- Ecclesiastes 7:10 (ESV)

Say not, “Why were the former days better than these?”
For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.

Key Chapters

Numbers 13 – 14



We face the same choice the people faced in the book of Numbers. We can believe in the promises of God and take the victory He has promised us, entering in to the victorious life of faith, or we can reject His promises, live in unbelief, and wander around in the wilderness, griping and complaining, walking in circles, never entering into His promised rest.

– Chuck Smith (1927 – 2013)

Numbers Conclusions

Numbers Conclusions

- The land that the spies explored was a good land but full of new challenges.
- Ten of the spies rejected it and led the people into disobedience and rebellion.

Numbers Conclusions

- The generation that rejected the fulfillment of God's promises died out.
- Nonetheless, Numbers is the prelude to a message of hope.
- Under the leadership of **Joshua and Caleb**, the next generation entered the land that we call **Israel** to this day.

Numbers Conclusions



Numbers shows the challenges of living a life of faith in difficult circumstances. Its themes include trusting God for provision and protection, obeying him despite our fears, accepting his anointed leaders and submitting to his discipline. It demonstrates the importance of following God's will and the consequences of rebellion and disobedience.

*– Abraham Saggi,
South Indian Bible Teacher*

One Last thing: Mr. Spock was Jewish.

- The Cohens (priests) put their hands this way when they say the blessing over the people from **Numbers 6:22-26**.
- The sign may also appear on Cohen tombstones.



Aaron's Priestly Blessing

Numbers 6:22-27

Paraphrase: "Live long and prosper."

Aaron's Priestly Blessing

Numbers 6:22-27

²² The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

²⁴ ‘The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.’

²⁷ So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

Numbers Conclusions

- As we close let's pray that God would help us to be a generation that lives by faith in his word.
- Let's pray that we might receive strength to remain faithful until we see the fulfillment of God's promises.
- Let's also be ready to accept the fresh challenges that come our way in this life of faith.