

## Numbers Notes

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### Introduction:

“Numbers” is the name for this book that is derived from the Septuagint translation. The Hebrew name for this book is “midbar” which means “in the wilderness.” This is the book of journeying from the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 2<sup>nd</sup> month out of Egypt to the 40<sup>th</sup> year.

- They are still at Sinai, but stand are on the verge of entering Canaan at Kadesh Barnea.
- They are still following the pillar of cloud and fire, still watered by the rock that led them through the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:4), and still fed by manna from heaven.

Deut. 1:2 tells us that it is an 11-day journey from Egypt to Canaan, but early in Numbers they will turn away and, as a result, will spend 38 years in the wilderness.

- Psalm 78:32-33 – “In spite of this they still sinned, and did not believe in His wondrous works. Therefore their days He consumed in futility, and their years in fear.”
- Numbers contains the lessons and pictures for the believer as he/she begins to enter into the promises of God. It is the learning to walk after the spirit rather than living according to the flesh or walking after the natural. Many of these lessons are failures and are therefore counterexamples to the believer in how we are to function.
- Hebrews 4:8-9 – “For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would have afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.”

### Chapter 1:

1:1 – “Now the Lord spoke” – God is going to give instructions with an eye to the promised land. So much of God’s work is to prepare us for a future experience.

- “the Lord spoke to Moses” – This is stated over 150 times and in more than 20 ways in the book of Numbers.

1:3 – “go to war...number them” – This refers to the principal military purpose of the census.

- In God’s army, every member counts.
- “by their armies” – God is making soldiers out of slaves.
- Ch.1 numbers the fighting men of Israel. Ch.2 orders the camp. Ch.3 numbers the priests and the Levites. Ch.4 details the priestly and Levitical duties. None of the people get to choose for themselves what they want to do. It is all ordered of God.
- God placed them all, as we are put into His body at His discretion. The nation has the choice whether they will walk in the spiritual (according to God’s direction) or in the natural (taking the lead to attain a spiritual result) or in the flesh (doing whatever their rebellious hearts desire.) But they do not get to choose where they are placed.

1:4 – “head of his father’s house” – These are the chiefs or heads of each tribe.

- The names of the chiefs are interesting with respect to Jacob’s blessings. And many of the names form a compound name with God (“El”).

1:16 – “leaders of their father’s tribes” – These are the God appointed leaders.

- God will only choose leaders who will submit to His leadership and follow His headship.

1:21 – “Reuben” – The tribe here numbers 46,500.

- The tribe numbers 43,730 in Num. 26:7.

- 1:23 – “Simeon” – The tribe here numbers 59,300.  
 - The tribe numbers 22,200 in Num. 26:14.
- 1:25 – “Gad” – The tribe here numbers 45,650.  
 - The tribe numbers 40,500 in Num. 26:18.
- 1:27 – “Judah” – The tribe here numbers 74,600.  
 - The tribe numbers 76,500 in Num. 26:22.
- 1:29 – “Issachar” – The tribe numbers 54,400.  
 - The tribe numbers 64,300 in Num. 26:25.
- 1:31 – “Zebulun” – The tribe here numbers 57,400.  
 - The tribe numbers 60,500 in Num. 26:27.
- 1:33 – “Ephraim” – The tribe here numbers 40,500.  
 - The tribe numbers 32,500 in Num. 26:37.
- 1:35 – “Manasseh” – The tribe here numbers 32,200.  
 - The tribe numbers 52,700 in Num. 26:34.
- 1:37 – “Benjamin” – The tribe here numbers 35,400.  
 - The tribe numbers 45,600 in Num. 26:41.
- 1:39 – “Dan” – The tribe here numbers 62,700.  
 - The tribe numbers 64,400 in Num. 26:43.
- 1:41 – “Asher” – The tribe here numbers 41,500.  
 - The tribe numbers 53,400 in Num. 26:47.
- 1:43 – “Naphtali” – The tribe here numbers 53,400.  
 - The tribe numbers 45,400 in Num. 26:50.
- 1:44 – “all who were numbered” – The total number of fighting men of the nation of Israel is here 603,550. (603,550 is larger then the present day standing army of the U.S. of 1998.)  
 - The total will number 601,730 in Num. 26:51.  
 - Of the 603,550, only 2 (Joshua and Caleb) enter the promised land.  
 • While in Egypt, in slavery under Pharaoh and the taskmaster, they grew (from 70 to 2.5 million in 400 years.) But in the wilderness, because of the difficult journey and because of their unwillingness to enter the promised land, they decreased.
- 1:47 – “the Levites were not numbered” – The Levites are set aside to God in place of the firstborn and Joseph is made two through Ephraim and Manasseh.
- 1:51 – “put to death” – This is not a position to be taken to oneself. It is God who appoints.  
 - It was this portion of Scripture that David violated when transporting the ark to Jerusalem the first time, causing the death of Uzzah. (For God, the right thing must be done in the right way.)

- 1:53 – “around the tabernacle” – The Levites camp directly around the tabernacle to keep others from improperly coming near the tabernacle and evoking God’s judgment.
- God chooses our inheritance for us. (Ps. 47:4)

## **Chapter 2:**

2:2 – “standard” – These are the flags, or ensigns, of their tribes.

- Jewish tradition says the flag next to Judah had the picture of a lion, the flag next to Ephraim had the picture of a calf, the flag next to Dan had the picture of an eagle, and the flag next to Reuben had the picture of a man.
- In Rev. 4, the cherubim each have the face of a lion, the face of a man, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle with God in the center. All is measured in proximity to His position.
- Jewish historians record that every tent pitched facing the tabernacle and the pillar of fire and smoke.

2:9 – “these shall break camp first” – Those who camp on the east side of the tabernacle go first.

- Nahshon, who is the head of the tribe of Judah, will always be first into battle. Nahshon is of the line of Jesus.

2:16 – “these shall be second to break camp” – The southern tribes led by Reuben go out second.

2:17 – “in the middle of the camps” – The tabernacle and Levites go out in the middle of the nation.

- God will always remain at the center of the nation of Israel, at rest and on the move.
- God is a God of order. (1 Cor. 14:33,40) It is only when things are done orderly that God can be clearly seen to be the center of it all.
- Discipline is necessary for any army to fight significantly. Obedience on the part of the soldiers and workers is necessary.

2:24 – “the third to break camp” – The western tribes led by Ephraim follow the tabernacle.

- These are the 108,100 fighting men from Rachel through Joseph and Benjamin.

2:31 – “they shall break camp last” – The northern tribes led by Dan go last.

- The last is an important place in the nation of Israel as Amalek attacked the hinder part of the camp. Dan’s tribes are to protect the weak and slow of the nation.
- Interesting thing about this camp, if the tribes are spread out in lines (with about 150,000 people in the north and south, 108,000 on the west, and 186,000 on the east) the encampment would take the shape of a cross. It may have been the orderliness of the encampment in the shape of a cross that led Balaam to say, “How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel!” (Num. 24:5)
- God has each one numbered; He is that concerned with the individual. Ps. 56:8 – God is intimate with us. Mt. 10 – worth more than sparrows. He has our addresses. He is familiar with our houses and our families. And He knows how we are positioned in the society around us.

### Chapter 3:

Ch. 3 gives the description of God ordering the Levites, the workers to oversee the worship.

- God orders and establishes our lives. He is working and is intricately involved.
- These duties may seem completely insignificant in light of the warfare of the day. But faithfulness to His command is what is required by God, and only obedience will yield the glory of God in the end.

3:2 – “Nadab and Abihu” – They died before the Lord for offering profane fire. (Lev. 10)

3:3 – “consecrated” – Lit. “to fill the hand of.” (Exod. 32:29) By this act, there was an investing of authority, a consecration, and a setting apart.

- “priests” – Priests and Levites differ. The priests were Aaron and his sons. The rest of the tribe of Levi were the Levites who were given to Aaron and his sons as servants.

3:10 – “attend to their priesthood” – The NT parallel for the believer is found in Romans 12:1-8.

- “put to death” – God has ordered and instructed. This is not something to be taken to oneself like Korah did in Num. 16.
- The office is at God’s appointment, not because Aaron was great. (Exod. 32)

3:13 – “because all the firstborn are Mine” – In Exod. 13:2, the firstborn males were set apart to God after the Passover. Now Levi is taken in their place. (Exod. 32:26)

- “Levites shall be Mine” – God takes the Levites.
- Only God knows how to use a life without consuming and destroying it.

3:17 – “Gershon, Kohath, and Merari” – These are the three families of the Levites.

3:21 – “of the Gershonites” – The sons of Gershon number 7,500.

3:23 – “westward” – Gershon camps west of the tabernacle next to the tribe of Ephraim.

3:26 – “all the work relating to them” – God delineates the duties of the Gershonites all the way down to the cords with which to tie up the fabric.

3:27 – “of the Kohathites” – The sons of Kohath number 8,600.

3:29 – “camp on the north side” – Kohath camps south of the tabernacle next to the tribe of Reuben.

3:31 – “the ark” – Kohath was responsible for the ark and other articles. This is a privilege.

- They were responsible to answer to Eleazar.

3:33 – “families of Merari” – The sons of Merari number 6,200.

3:35 – “camp on the north side” – Merari camps north of the tabernacle next to the tribe of Dan.

3:36 – “boards of the tabernacle” – Responsible for the frame, all the way down to the stakes.

- These are responsibilities. They are not for one’s own esteem. (Luke 17:10)

3:38 – “camp before the tabernacle on the east” – Moses and Aaron and their sons were to camp east of the tabernacle next to the tribe of Judah.

- The priests pitched their tents to be between the presence of God and the people.

3:39 – “numbered of the Levites” – The Levites totaled 22,000 men from a month old and above.

- The total of the numbers from vv. 22, 28, and 34 adds up to 22,300. It is supposed that the 300 which were struck off from the account when the exchange was to be made were the firstborn of the Levites themselves, born since their coming out of Egypt, which could not be put into the exchange because they were already sanctified to God.

3:43 – “the number of their names” – Interesting.

- “the firstborn males” – All the firstborn males of Israel number 22,273.
  - That means there is a difference of 273 more firstborn males of Israel than Levites.

3:45 – “Mine” – Some people do not like God’s ownership or possession of them. But each believer has been “bought at a price.” (1 Cor. 6:20)

3:46 – “the redemption” – They were to redeem the additional firstborn males for 5 shekels each.

#### **Chapter 4:**

Ch. 4 details the responsibilities of each Levitical member. God tells them how to break down the tabernacle and gives all the details.

- David will use these instructions later in transporting the ark into Jerusalem. (2 Sam. 6; 1 Chron. 13-15)
- The Levites are responsible for their God-given service as well as for their normal family and life’s responsibilities. They must handle both duties well. (To do so, they would have had to keep personal responsibilities to a minimum.)

4:3 – “from thirty years old...to fifty years old” – From Num. 8:24, we learn that the beginning age for service was 25; perhaps the first five years was something of an apprenticeship.

- “to do the work” – Even though the Levites totaled 22,000, only those 30-50 years of age could serve.

4:5 – “when the camp prepares to journey” – These are the details of how to move the implements.

- Do we get details like this in our daily lives?

4:15 – “covering the sanctuary” – The priests were to cover the tabernacle and all its items before the Kohathites would begin to come in the tabernacle to transport them.

4:18 – “Do not cut off” – God does not want them to die.

- It is as important for Moses and Aaron to never ask the Kohathites to do something apart from which God has ordered as it is for the Kohathites to be obedient to what God has asked.
- “Success is doing what God has called me to do today” – Damian Kyle.

4:20 – “lest they die” – These instructions were to prevent them from dying.

- These instructions keep these things separate and sanctified, even when moving.

4:36 – “those who were numbered” – The working Kohathites numbered 2,750.

4:40 – “those who were numbered” – The working Gershonites numbered 2,630.

4:44 – “those who were numbered” – The working sons of Merari numbered 3,200.

4:48 – “those who were numbered” – There were 8,580 working Levites total.

## **Chapter 5:**

The theme of Numbers 5 is purity – external and internal.

5:3 – “not defile their camps” – They are cleaning up the camp before getting ready to move.  
(Num. 10)

- Purity even while in transport. There is no vacation from purity. Purity in the camp is necessary for power on the journey.
- “in the midst of which I dwell” – God’s presence requires purity. The essential issue was the presence of the Lord in the camp; there can be no uncleanness where He dwells.
- Our bodies, as the Temple of the Holy Spirit, are to remain pure.
- In the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2-3), the dwelling of God with man will be uncompromised by any form of uncleanness. (Rev. 21:27)

5:7 – “plus one-fifth” – They are to pay the full price plus an additional 20% for restitution.

5:10 – “shall be his” – These are included in the priest’s provisions.

5:13 – “it is hidden” – That means there were no eyewitnesses.

- God outlines punishments for wrongdoing. But if someone “gets away” with something so that nobody sees it, God says “I see it” and takes care of it Himself. (This is especially outlined in Deuteronomy.)
- Heb. 4:13 – “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”

5:14 – “spirit of jealousy” – God’s punishment for the wife who thinks she is getting away with adultery or His protection for the wife of a jealous man.

- Song of Songs 8:6 – “Jealousy as cruel as the grave.”

5:15 – “no oil” – Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit

- “no frankincense” – Frankincense is a type of prayer

5:16 – “before the Lord” – It is all before Him, including the actions and the judgments.

5:17 – “holy water...and take some of the dust” – This is not a poison. Throughout Church history, this passage has been used as support for giving poison to a suspect to see if the person would survive by God and then be deemed innocent. But that is backwards here.

5:21 – “your thigh rot and your belly swell” – This is the curse. It is God’s supernatural judgment on hidden adultery.

5:23 – “scrape them off into the bitter water” – This would wash the ink into the water.

5:25 – “the offering” – There is a sacrifice for this too.

5:27 – “her belly will swell” – This woman would be pregnant with punishment.

- If you see a few of these women walking around camp, it would affect everyone.

## **Chapter 6:**

6:2 – “man or woman” – Both were permitted to take the Nazirite vow.

- “the vow of a Nazirite” – Jewish rabbis said this duration was normally one month. But it could go longer or even be for a lifetime as in the case of Samson.
- “Nazirite” – (Heb. “naziyr”) Lit. “consecrated, or devoted.”
  - New Testament “agape” love is a devoted love, a commitment to remain with the one you love. Christians are called to “love the Lord your god with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:29)
- “separate themselves” – These are the things they do to separate themselves to God.
  - Not everyone could be a priest or even a Levite. (Heredity determined priests and God’s sovereignty determined prophets.) But everyone (man or woman, priest or people) could separate themselves over to God.

6:3,6 – “separate himself from...separates himself to” – Both, separated unto and separated from, are required. The secret to separation is not what you’re separated from, but what you are separated unto. It is better to think about what you get, than to get stuck on what you have to give up.

- The example of dating couples who go out of their way to do things they never would have done otherwise because they are in love.
- Consecration, many times, is not merely giving up the sinful things that are not permitted at all, but it is also the working out of one’s life the things that aren’t expedient, that is, anything that inhibits our relationship with Jesus. (Heb. 12:2)

6:3 – “separate himself from wine” – The first of the three requirements for a Nazirite was to abstain from anything associated with wine throughout the duration of the vow. This is a giving up of worldly pleasures. Wine wasn’t prohibited in Israel – the people were waiting for the Messiah to give them their own vine and fig tree.

- 1 Cor. 6:12 – “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.”

6:5 – “no razor shall come upon his head” – The second of the three requirements for a Nazirite was the refrain from cutting one’s hair during the period of the vow. This is a giving up of personal dignity.

- In an age of self-esteem and self-fulfillment, Christians too are to set aside what men think about them, to concern themselves with what God thinks about them.
- 2 Cor. 10:12 – “those who compare themselves among themselves are not wise.” We need to compare ourselves to Jesus.

6:6 – “not go near a dead body” – The third of the three requirements for a Nazirite was to keep from touching a dead body. The Nazirite was to remain separated from death and give themselves over entirely to life.

- The New Testament instructs us to “set your mind on things above” (Col. 3:2) and to “not store up treasures on earth (Matt. 6:19).

- 6:7 – “even for his father” – There not to be defiled with even the death of their relatives. There is a price to pay to follow through with this vow.
- 6:12 – “the former days shall be lost” – An accidental defilement starts the vow over.
- 6:14 – “his offering” – Sacrifices are offered here too. God gives the order for the sacrifices.
- 6:18 – “consecrated head” – The power of the Nazirite vow was not merely in the hair, staying away from dead bodies, and not drinking wine (as Samson was wrong in thinking). The power was instead a result of the consecration unto the Lord that these things represented.
- 6:21 – “according to the vow which he takes, so he must do” – They are expected to keep their vows to the Lord.
- In a way we are all Nazirites: We too are to keep ourselves from what intoxicates this world, to lose our lives to save them, and to keep from death eternally for life more abundant.
- 6:23 – “this is the way you shall bless” – God tells Aaron and the priests what to say. He is making sure the priests do not misrepresent Him.
- How would I feel if someone constantly told my kids I was angry at them or that I would want to disown them, thereby, misrepresenting me to them?
  - We will always misrepresent God if we do not simply tell others exactly what God has said about Himself.
- 6:24-26 – “you” – This is singular in the Hebrew. God is speaking to the individual.
- God sees Israel as 2-3 million individuals, all numbered, ordered, and arranged.
  - This blessing is for protection (v. 24), pardon (v. 25), and peace (v. 26)
- 6:24 – “bless” – Lit. “get down on your knees and serve.”
- “The blessing of God is the goodness of God in action” – John Calvin.
  - John 13:1-17 – The example of Jesus who girded Himself with a towel to wash the disciples’ feet.
  - “keep” – A military term, lit. “to guard.”
- 6:25 – “His face” – We see the “glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:6)
- “shine” – The presence of God gives light.
- 6:26 – “lift up his countenance” – The idea is that God is smiling in your presence.
- John 16:27 – “For the Father Himself loves (“phileo” – likes) you.”
  - “peace” – (Heb “shalom”) George Morrison defined “peace” as “the possession of adequate resources.”
- 6:27 – “my name” – For other occurrences of God’s name see Exod. 3:14; 34:5-7.



## **Chapter 7:**

Ch. 7 – God lists the gifts given by the heads of the tribes. These are freewill offerings.

- God takes note of service and offerings, written forever in heaven.
- This is the longest chapter in Numbers and the second longest chapter in the Bible.

7:3 – “six covered carts” – This is one cart per two tribes.

7:5 – “give them to the Levites, to every man according to his service” – These gifts would assist the Levites in their responsibilities.

- God even helps them pull their service off! (When God calls, God equips.)

7:8 – “four carts” – God wisely and graciously ordered the most strength to those that had the most work. Each had carts “according to their service.”

7:9 – “to the sons of Kohath he gave none” – Kohath bears the ark and other articles of the tabernacle.

- God helps with every other burden except one: the presence of God. There is something to be borne. It is what God asks us to carry. This is why oxen could never be of proper assistance. See 2 Sam. 6:3 and 1 Chron. 15:13. David failed to follow “the due order.”
- We want affection from our wife or kids, but we don’t want to force them to give us affection. It makes it hollow.
- This is the place we individually stand before God.

7:10 – “the leaders offered the dedication offering” – One offering is given per tribe per day.

- All the offerings are the same. (v. 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42, 48, 54, 60, 66, 72, 78.)

7:12-78 – “first day was Nahshon” – The order of the presentation of their offerings to the Lord is the same as the order they break camp for their journeys.

7:84-88 – “this was the dedication offering” – This is the total from the offerings.

7:89 – “he heard the voice” – Moses hears God’s audible voice from above the mercy seat.

## **Chapter 8:**

8:2 – “lampstand” – Titus Vespasian carried away the lampstand from the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD.

- The Temple Institute in Jerusalem is trying to recreate the lampstand, but cannot keep it from drooping as the gold cannot support its own weight. They are considering making the lampstand of steel and overlaying it with gold.
- “light in front of the lampstand” – The lampstand was the only light of the sanctuary.
  - The light of God’s Word. “Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” (Ps. 119:105)

8:6 – “cleanse them ceremonially” – The consecration of the Levites for their work.

- The cleansing of the Levites may be compared with the account of the ordination of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood (Lev. 8). The Levites are helpers to the priests, and the language describing their consecration is somewhat different from that of the priests.

8:9 – “whole congregation” – The 2-3 million Israelites are standing before the 22,000 Levites.

- 8:10 – “lay their hands on” – They are acknowledging the replacement of their firstborn.
- This is a ceremony. Power and authority are not passed through the laying on of hands. The laying on of hands is only to confirm what God has already done.
- 8:11 – “the work” – This is ministry; service. The Levites are to set up and carried the tents.
- Are you in the ministry or is the ministry in you? Ministry is not about being in front of people.
  - We will all be rewarded based on faithfulness to the ministry that God asked us to accomplish. Rewards are not based on scope of ministry.
  - In Acts 6:3, the deacons were filled with the Holy Ghost to wait on tables. The impact of Stephen’s life on Paul is immeasurable.
  - All NT believers are “able ministers of the New Testament.” (2 Cor. 3:6)
- 8:24 – “from 25 years old and above” – The intern age for the Levites went from age 25 to age 30.
- “to perform service” – (Heb. “tsaba”) This can also be translated “to go forth, or to wage war.”
- 8:25 – “at the age of 50 years” – The retirement age was 50. They retired from the physical labor, but still ministered among the younger Levites when the tabernacle was set up.

## **Chapter 9:**

- 9:1 – “first month of the second year” – This comes one month before Numbers 1.
- 1 Cor. 5:7 – “Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.”
- 9:3 – “at twilight” – Lit. “between the evenings.”
- 9:5 – “they kept the Passover” – We don’t have record of them keeping Passover again until they enter the promised land in Josh. 5:10.
- The Passover is a reminder to them that this journey started with their deliverance from Egypt that resulted from the death of the firstborn sons.
  - Col. 2:6 – “as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, so continue to walk in Him.”
  - Rev. 2:4 – “Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”
- 9:8 – “what the Lord will command” – These men sincerely want to keep the Passover and were unintentionally defiled, so Moses goes to God for an answer on this situation.
- 9:11 – “the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month” – This is one month later on the same day.
- Did Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus wait a month to celebrate Passover?
- 9:12 – “now break one of its bones” – When Jesus was crucified, not one of His bones was broken. (John 16:36)
- 9:13 – “that man shall bear his sin” – The one who refuses to keep the Passover is left with no covering for his sin.
- No one is refused the Passover. God even makes provision for the defiled. But the people can refuse and, therefore, leave themselves without a sin covering.
  - God doesn’t send anyone to hell, they choose. He has provided the way!
- 9:17 – “settled” – (Heb. “shakan”) This is the ‘shekinah’ presence of God.

9:18 – “at the command of the Lord” – Step by step He leads me. God is teaching them to walk in obedience.

- 2-3 million people are being led. They could all see it and it served to protect them. (Ps. 105:39; 121:5-6)
- God’s leading was: 1. direct, 2. continuous, and 3. infallible. (Therefore, all their complaining and disobedience is in contrast to this great light.)

9:23 – “at the command of the Lord they journeyed” – The tragedy of their subsequent disobedience is heightened by this paragraph describing their obedience.

## **Chapter 10:**

10:2 – “trumpets” – The trumpets were used to signal the people for a variety of purposes.

- They had to be willing to be interrupted at any time in their daily lives.
- We are waiting for a trumpet blast too. “Therefore, comfort one another with these words...” (1 Thess. 4:18) There is a difference between the last trump of God in First Thessalonians and the trumpets of Revelation.
- “calling of the assembly” – There may be something supernatural about these trumpets to call 2-3 million people at one time.

10:6 – “their journeys” – Plural. These trumpets were used often.

10:9 – “remembered” – The idea is “when God turns His attention to.”

10:10 – “solemn days” – These are the feast days.

10:12 – “the children of Israel set out” – No doubt, there is some confusion with this first movement.

- This entire movement (10:14-25) is by the trumpets.

10:29 – “Hobab” – He is Moses’ brother-in-law.

- “Reuel” – He is also known as Jethro. (Exod. 2:18; 3:1)

10:31 – “how” – God leads where, but Hobab can help in the how.

10:32 – “if you go with us” – Hobab seems to go with. (Judges 1:16; 4:11)

10:33 – “to search out a resting place” – The Lord is going ahead of them to prepare a place for them.

- God is preparing the people for the place, as well as preparing the place for the people.

10:36 – “many thousands” – Lit. “unto the thousands of thousands.” There were millions.

10:35-36 – “whenever the ark set out...when it rested” – The beginning and ending of the day.

- Their journey begins with recognition of the impending battle and the need for the Lord to provide victory.
- Their journey ends with a sense of the need of God’s presence.
- “Rise up, O Lord” – David quotes this in Ps. 68:1.

## **Chapter 11:**

The nation is only 8 days from Canaan. (Deut. 1:2; Num. 10:33)

11:1 – “complained” – The nation is moving, so the complaining starts again.

- We are not even told what they are complaining about, for in God’s perspective, they are complaining about nothing.
- “heard it” – God always hears.
- “fire of the Lord burned among them” – God takes care of them Himself.
- “outskirts of the camp” – The grumblers and complainers often reside out of the center of God’s work.
- There are gripers and complainers in every camp.

11:3 – “Taberah” – They name the spots of their journey as a reminder of their mistakes.

11:4 – “mixed multitude” – There are tares among the wheat.

- The mixed multitude is a picture of the lukewarm Christian, containing a mixture of the hot and the cold.
- “intense craving” – This is “lusting.”
- “wept again” – This started in Exod. 16:2.

11:5 – “we remember the fish” – They forget Taberah, but remember the food.

- They have selective memory. They forget the slavery, the murder of their children, and the overwhelming work.
- Their “god is their belly.” (Phil. 3:19)

11:6 – “except this manna” – They are despising the provision of the Lord in the manna.

- In Num. 12, Miriam and Aaron will despise God’s provision for a leader in Moses.

11:8 – “pastry prepared with oil” – The manna tasted like cake.

- It took 9 million lbs/day to feed 2-3 million people, everyday for 40 years. (Ex. 16)
- They only needed to eat the manna for another 8 days.
- It is better to have manna in freedom than to have spice in slavery.

11:10 – “everyone” – The grumbling would be getting loud.

11:11 – “You have laid the burden of all these people on me” – Now Moses is complaining too.

- God was the one really carrying them. He was carrying Moses as well as the people.

11:15 – “kill me” – Moses would rather die than continue with these people like this.

- 2 Corinth. 1:8 – Paul and Silas “despaired of life itself.”

11:16 – “gather to Me seventy men” – They gather the leaders together to hear the judgment.

- There is a necessity of the plurality of leadership, especially in contentious times.

11:18 – “well with us in Egypt” – It is nearly blasphemous for them to say that.

11:20 – “becomes loathsome to you” – God turns them over to themselves. He gives them what they want. There is a point sometimes where God stops trying to hold us off.

- Rom. 1:24,26,28 – “God gave them up to uncleanness.”
- Ps. 106:13-15 – “He gave them their request, but sent leanness to their souls.”
- The Church isn’t meant to compete with the world. It doesn’t have that capacity. The difference is seen at the wedding of Cana (John 2): Jesus saves the best for last, whereas the world puts the best out first and afterward sets out the poison.
- “despised the Lord” – God is our provider. To despise what He provides is to despise Him.

11:21 – “six hundred thousand men on foot” – They were counted in Numbers 1.

11:22 – “to provide enough on them” – Moses doubts too, even after all he has seen.

11:25 – “prophesied” – The idea is “they spoke forth the Word of God.” Prophesying take on different forms throughout the OT.

11:28 – “forbid them” – Joshua thinks something is out of order. He is jealous for Moses’ sake.

- There were no requirements for prophesying as there were for sacrifice.

11:29 – “that all the Lord’s people were prophets” – Joel prophesied of this day and Peter applied that prophecy to the church at Pentecost. (Acts 2:16-21)

- This verse is a fitting introduction to the inexcusable challenge to Moses’ leadership in Numbers 12.

11:31 – “from the Lord” – There are migrations of birds on the Sinai Peninsula, but the numbers of them seems to indicate that this is something supernatural.

- “2 cubits” – about 3 feet. The birds are either piled 3 ft. high or flying in at about 3 ft. off the ground.

11:32 – “stayed up all that day” – There is no reference to them gathering manna these days.

- “ten homers” – This is 60 bushels for the least!
  - Jon Courson says this is about 200 Kentucky Fried Chicken family-meal buckets.
- “spread them out” – They are drying them in the sun.

11:35 – “Kibroth-hattavah” – means “the graves of lust.”

- These things were written as an example for us. (1 Cor. 10:11)
- Psalm 78:23-31 – “...the wrath of God slew the fattest of them...”

## Chapter 12:

- 12:1 – “Then” – This comes on the heels of God’s judgment of the congregation at Kibroth Hattaavah. Now, they turn on Moses. Often, when things go sour within a group, they turn on the leader whether or not it is the leader’s fault.
- “Miriam” – She was gifted as a prophetess.
    - Miriam is the leader of this attack on Moses. The verb “spoke” is in the feminine tense and her name is listed first. Also the greater judgment of God falls on her.
    - Aaron seems to have the tendency of being a passive follower.
  - “Aaron” – He was ordained the high priest.
    - Moses was a humbled and failed man, and this would cause Miriam and Aaron to not think he was qualified. But Moses has this position at the ordination of God – and he is there as a testimony that God can use anybody.
  - “Ethiopian woman” – The woman is a Cushite.
    - This is Moses’ second wife. Zipporah is out of the picture at this time.
    - It is not clear if they are of different skin color or not.
    - It is Moses’ relatives causing the problem, over an area of Moses’ life they have no responsibility over.
- 12:2 – “the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses” – They are using his wife as an excuse. Their jealousy is the real problem.
- Micah 6:4 speaks of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam as God’s gracious provision for Israel.
  - Jesus said “no prophet is accepted in his own country.” (Luke 4:24)
  - This accusation is totally unfair. It was God that called Moses to this position and ministry. If Moses moves away from this calling due to the pressure of his sister and brother, he will actually be disobeying God.
- “Lord heard it” – God listens to all this.
- Miriam and Aaron are accusing Moses of the very same sin that is motivating them to make the accusation.
- 12:3 – “humble” – The Hebrew word speaks of “one who is more willing to suffer himself than to make someone else suffer.”
- Moses’ meekness must have made this hard to write about himself.
- 12:4 – “Come out, you three” – God calls them out!
- “suddenly” – God doesn’t normally speak to Aaron and Miriam. They have to be a little nervous.
- 12:6 – “My words” – God has the say.
- Moses refuses to argue, but rather lets God defend him. “The servant of the Lord must not quarrel.” (2 Tim. 2:24)
  - “a prophet among you” – Miriam was a prophetess.
  - “vision” – Initially God spoke to prophets as seers. They actually saw His messages.
- 12:7 – “My servant Moses” – God seems to expect His people to hold the anointing of the Lord, and therefore those anointed ones, very highly.
- “faithful” – God seems to approve of Moses’ wife.
- 12:8 – “the form of the Lord” – Moses sees something of God’s shape.

12:10 – “leprous, as white as snow” – This is full blown leprosy instantaneously.

- Miriam seems to have been the instigator.

12:12 – “half consumed” – Is Miriam without fingers and toes? What did she look like?

12:13 – “Moses cried out to the Lord” – Moses turns straight to God seeking is grace for Miriam. This displays Moses’ meekness.

12:14 – “spit in her face” – Spitting was a sign of disdain. This shows how God felt about Miriam over all this.

12:15 – “seven days” – This would give Miriam time to think.

- Did God heal her slowly or over time?
- The entire camp is held up because of the sin of the leaders.

### **Chapter 13:**

The nation of Israel is on the border of the promised land. The nation has been waiting for this for over 400 years, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It has been about 1 year since being set free from Egypt.

- Kadesh Barnea” – Kadesh means “holiness.” Barnea means “wandering.” These are the two things this nation is standing between.

13:2 – “send men to spy” – The spies are the idea of the people. (Deut. 1:19-26) God already had the land spied out and He told them it was a “land flowing with milk and honey.” (Exod. 23:20-31)

- The spies are an indication of their desire to walk by sight and not by faith.
- “giving to the children of Israel” – God wants to give the land. They didn’t have to earn it. They only have to believe enough to obey.
- The NT application is the 2 steps of faith: 1. salvation through faith, and 2. entering into the promises of God by faith.

13:6 – “Caleb” – He was of the families of Kennizites, but was now an accepted member and leader of the tribe of Judah.

13:8 – “Oshea” – means “salvation.” Moses changed his name to Ja-Hoshea, Joshua (v. 16), which means “Jahovah is salvation.”

- Joshua in Hebrew is equivalent to Jesus in Greek/Aramaic.
- Joshua is the first book of the Bible names after a person. His life is a type of Jesus, whereas Moses was a type of the Law. Moses, the lawgiver, couldn’t bring the people into the promised land. But Joshua, a picture of Jesus, could and did.

13:20 – “first ripe grapes” – This is early August.

13:22 – “descendants of Anak” – Goliath was of the children of the Anakim.

13:23 – “Valley of Eshcol” – Eshcol is still very fertile. These grapes were too big for one guy to carry.

13:27 – “milk and honey” – The land is good for livestock (milk producing) and produce (honey producing).

- The land is exactly what God said it would be. (Exod. 3:8; 23:20-31)

13:28 – “Nevertheless” – This means “that is all that can be said in this direction.”

- “cities are fortified” – God told them that they would live in cities they did not build.
  - They see the impossibilities of entering into God’s promises. They have their eyes on the battles instead of on God.
  - The giants are real, but so is God!
  - Heb. 3:16-19 – Israel had faith enough for the Passover and their deliverance from Egypt, but not enough to enter and possess the land.

13:30 – “let us go up at once” – Caleb wasn’t afraid.

- In the land, Caleb at 85, chooses Hebron where the giants are. (Josh. 14:6-15; 15:14; Judges 1:10)
- Hebron means “communion.”

13:32 – “all the people” – They are exaggerating because of fear.

13:33 – “There we saw” – Unbelief often presents itself as being “factual” or “practical” or “down to earth.”

- “giants” – (Heb. “nephilim.”) Lit. “fallen ones.” (Also in Gen. 6:2-5)
  - Other examples of giants are Sihon and Og. (Og’s bed/coffin was 13 ft. x 6 ft.)
  - Jamieson, Fawcett, and Brown speak of archeologists uncovering houses with 18 ft. ceilings and 6 ft. hinges.
- “grasshoppers in our sight” – They are looking at the giants and at themselves, but failing to look at God.
  - The paralysis of analysis is a result of the fact that analysis is nearly always based on comparison. (2 Cor. 10:12)

## **Chapter 14:**

14:1 – “all the congregation lifted up their voices” – Ten faithless leaders turn the heart of 2-3 million people in disobedience.

- “cried” – 2-3 million people are crying.

14:2 – “Egypt” – That was before redemption.

- “if only we had died in this wilderness” – God has not allowed them to be comfortable in the wilderness in an attempt to move them into the promised life.
  - No matter what God does, they gripe about it.

14:3 – “Why has the Lord” – This is blasphemy against the Lord.

14:4 – “return to Egypt” – They are making plans.

- “select a leader” – Joshua is there, but it isn’t his time yet.

14:5 – “Moses and Aaron fell on their faces” – This is after all that Moses has seen and done.

14:8 – “bring...give...” – They know God’s grace. It’s His promise and His provision.

- Children have no problem accepting gifts from parents who delight in them.
- Our God only gives “good gifts.” (Luke 11:13)

14:9 – “the Lord is with us” – This is what makes the taking of the land possible.



- 14:10 – “stone them with stones” – They want to kill God’s servants.
- 14:11 – “How long” – God already knows. He is asking this to elicit from them.
- “reject Me” – God sees a failure to believe His Word as a rejection of Him.
    - Our flesh hates faith.
  - “believe” – This is what God is looking for. Believe is to have faith, or to trust.
    - Hebrews 4:1-10 – “we who have believed do enter that rest.” (Heb. 3:8-12)
    - Ps. 78:32-33 – “In spite of this they still sinned, and did not believe in his wondrous works. Therefore their days He consumed in futility, and their years in fear.”
    - Ps. 106:14 – “They despised the land, they believed not His word.”
- 14:12 – “I will make of you a nation” – God is testing Moses’ heart.
- 14:15 – “your fame” – Moses shows concern for God’s name and God’s glory.
- Moses won’t enter into rest without God’s glory remaining intact.
  - Would I go through a more difficult journey so God could receive more glory?
  - This failure of the people will, in part, keep Moses out of the promised land.
- 14:18 – “the Lord is longsuffering” – This is God’s name/person. It is what God showed of Himself to Moses in Exod. 34.
- 14:19 – “Pardon the iniquity of this people” – God has developed a heart for God’s people in Moses over the period of the past 40+ years.
- 14:24 – “he has a different spirit in him” – Caleb has followed wholeheartedly. He hasn’t drawn back. He is of a different character.
- 14:25 – “turn and move out into the wilderness” – God is not letting them go up into Canaan.
- 14:29 – “fall in the wilderness” – This is what they wanted. (Num. 14:2)
- 14:30 – “except for Caleb...and Joshua” – Of the fighting men, only Joshua and Caleb will make it into the promised land.
- Some Levites seem to make it too.
- 14:33 – “your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness” – The children are affected by the unbelief of their parents.
- Children are not punished for the sins of their parents. It is just that the decisions of the parents leave the entire family in the consequences of those decisions.
- 14:34 – “know My rejection” – They reject God, so God deals with them likewise.
- 14:40 – “we have sinned” – They aren’t repenting of their sin; they are trying to avoid the consequences. If this was genuine repentance, they would respond by trusting and obeying what God had now told them to do.
- The best place for them now is in the wilderness.
  - They are not skipping obedience to try to do this on their own. Be sure not to go until God leads so the difficulties in life are something God ordained and not self-orchestrated.

14:42 – “the Lord is not among you” – They aren’t following the pillar. They are going without the pillar, the ark, Moses, and the Lord.

14:44 – “presumed” – Lit. “to be lifted up.” That is “to be proud, arrogant, and swelled up with one’s own importance.”

- Unbelief was their sin before. Now presumption is their sin. Obedience is the difference between faith and presumption.
- They are trying to do God’s things in their own strength, but we cannot accomplish in the flesh what can only be done in the Spirit. Presumption is of the natural man. On the other hand, the spiritual man does God’s things, God’s ways, for God’s glory.

14:45 - “Hormah” – means “to devour”.

### **Chapter 15:**

15:2 – “When” – God is speaking to the younger generation, reiterating some prescribed rules and promises.

- We can delay God’s blessings, but we cannot destroy His promises. There are consequences to disobedience. But there is also grace to forgive.
- “If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” (2 Tim. 2:13)

15:3 – “make an offering” – God restates Levitical offerings.

- God goes back to the blood. This is a crucial reminder that His grace is only and always the result of the sacrifice of an innocent substitute.

15:19 – “heave offering” – When they enter in, they are to bring the first fruits of what God blesses them with.

15:22 – “sin unintentionally” – These are the offerings for unintentional sins of ignorance.

- Sins may be unintentional, but they still must be dealt with.

15:30 – “presumptuously” – The idea of “proudly, or with a high hand.” These are those who willfully and deliberately disobedient.

- In the Revelation, people will still be shaking their fists at and cursing God despite the judgments and revelation revealed there.
- “cut off from among his people” – This is the punishment for those of Israel who willingly and proudly sin against God and His people.
- God wants this next generation to bring offerings from their hand and of their heart.
- 1 Sam. 15:22 – “to obey is better than sacrifice.”

15:32 – “a man gathering sticks” – This is an example of a willful, presumptuous sinner.

- In this man’s actions are the seeds of rebellion, especially is God overlooks it.
- The stoning of this man is more merciful than if God let it go and it hurt the entire nation.
- The nation was told not to even kindle a fire on the Sabbath. (Exod. 35:3)
- “on the Sabbath” – This man is not only rejecting the Word of God, but by doing this on the Sabbath, he is also rejecting the sacrifice and worship of God.

- 15:38 – “make tassels” – The tassels and borders on their garments served as reminders of God and His calling on their lives.
- Luke 8:44 – The woman went for the border of His garment to be healed of a blood flow. Jesus’ border was the first she had seen that meant what it stood for. (Matt. 23:5)
  - “blue thread” – The blue symbolized heaven.

## **Chapter 16:**

Jude 11 speaks of the rebellion, or gainsaying, of Korah. Gainsaying means “to speak against.”

- These complaints differ from Israel’s earlier complaints in that these are planned and schemed. This is an organized mutiny. Korah was upset that Aaron had a preeminent place and thought that he could take the position to himself. So he incited those around him to rebellion.
  - But God was the one to set everything up. And when they rebel against the order of God, they are actually rebelling against God Himself.
  - 1 Sam. 15:23 – “rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.”
  - We are all susceptible to rebellion, because we are all under a God-established order.
- 16:1 – “Izhar” – He was a brother to Amram. That makes Moses and Korah cousins. (Num. 26:58-59)
- “Kohath” – The Kohathites were responsible for the holy articles. (Num. 4:15)
  - “sons of Reuben” – The Kohathites and the Reubenites camped together south of the tabernacle.
- 16:2 – “men of renown” – Korah goes after the influential.
- The influential can be swayed by the promise of more power.
- 16:3 – “against” – Their gainsaying was speaking against Moses and Aaron. But in truth, they were speaking “against the Lord.” (Num. 16:11)
- They are only interested in their own agenda, not the welfare of the group.
  - A Korah never settles an offense in a Biblical manner. (Matt. 18)
  - “We are never more like Satan than when we touch the glory” – Billy Graham.
  - “all the congregation is holy” – Truth is mixed with error. They are all equals, but Moses and Aaron have been placed in a God-ordained position. (Moses didn’t even want it - Exod. 3.)
  - They are equal in value, but they are not equal in position and authority. The position and authority are at God’s appointment. God’s kingdom isn’t a democracy, it is an order.
  - Moses’ heart was for all the people to be prophets empowered by God’s Spirit. (Num. 11:29)
  - “exalt yourselves above the assembly” – Korah accused Moses and Aaron of pride and self-seeking. These are the same sins Korah himself was guilty of.
- 16:5 – “the Lord will show” – Moses chooses to trust in God. (This is an example of Moses’ meekness.)
- 16:6 – “take censers” – Moses is giving Korah the go-ahead to try to take the position of High Priest to himself and see what God would do about it. Moses no longer tries to prevent Korah from destroying himself.
- 16:7 – “take too much upon yourselves” – Moses fires back at them.
- “Exaltation comes neither from the east nor the west...but God is the judge: He puts up down one and exalts another.” (Ps. 75:6)

16:9 – “the God of Israel has separated you” – The most important place in the Christian life is the place of God’s choice, the place He has prepared for us to fill. The important thing isn’t status, but faithfulness, doing the work God wants us to do.

16:10 – “the priesthood” – This is really what Korah wanted.

- They could be in God’s presence. Yet, that wasn’t enough.
- This unwillingness to remain in the calling God has ordained is a result of ambition and self-promotion.
- We all have the privilege of being in God’s presence. Then why do so many strive to go after the spotlight and get recognized? In the body, most of the vitals are never seen – hopefully.

16:13 – “you have brought us up” – They complain back to Moses.

- “milk and honey” – They are calling Egypt the promised land.

16:14 – “not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey” – They are blame-shifting. They aren’t in the promised land because of their own unbelief. It wasn’t Moses’ fault.

16:15 – “very angry” – Moses’ anger flared, as it has before.

- “I have not taken one donkey from them” – 1 Sam. 12:3.

16:16 – “be present before the Lord” – Moses and God are calling Korah out.

16:17 – “put incense in it” – Nadab and Abihu tried this for themselves in Lev. 10.

- “two hundred and fifty censors” – These are the 250 men taking the priesthood to themselves.
- They will test their ideas and philosophies in reality.

16:19 – “all the congregation” – Korah has rallied the majority and they still aren’t right.

16:22 – “one man sin, and You be angry with all” – Moses pleads mercy on the undeserving. God is eliciting something from him.

16:24 – “get away from” – This is great advice for all involved with a Korah.

- God is willing to show discrimination in the judgment of Korah’s family. Moses’ prayer was that God would not destroy the whole congregation (v. 22). God answers that prayer by giving people an opportunity to separate from Korah and the others, thereby getting them out of danger.

16:27 – “wives, their sons...little children” – It is sad to see their wives and children bear the consequences of their father.

- This speaks volumes of the effect of a bitter father on his family.

16:26 – “Touch nothing of theirs” – They are not to take any of the stuff to themselves.

16:28 – “not done them of my own will” – No one parts the Red Sea on their own.

- Moses is asking them to recognize God’s appointment and ordained order.

16:30 – “new thing” – Lit. “new creature.”

- This is an interesting test! Where did Moses get the idea?

- 16:31 – “as he finished speaking” – This comes right after Moses finished speaking.
- 16:33 – “those with them went down” – Many times others get caught in the pull of a Korah.  
 - About 15,000 people will die as a result of a rebellion initiated by one man.
- 16:34 – “all Israel” – These are those that rallied around Korah.  
 - “fled” – Where do you go when the ground is opening up?
- 16:35 – “consumed the two hundred and fifty men” – These men are the incense. They are cremated.
- 16:37 – “pick up the censers” – God redeems the lesson, making even this work for good.  
 - There were 250 censers; not one is to be lost.
- 16:38 – “hammered plates” – The Hebrew indicates that they were “beaten smooth.”
- 16:39 – “altar” – They would see their own reflection when bringing sacrifice.  
 - Billy Graham, when asked how he combats pride, said that whenever he senses pride rising up in him he takes 30 minutes to picture Christ on the cross.
- 16:40 – “memorial” – This is to remember God’s ordination and judgment.  
 - Only God’s calling and appointment make one worthy.  
 - Not all of Korah’s family died. (Num. 26:11) In Chronicles, the sons of Korah have a prominent place in temple worship. (Ps. 42-49; 84-85; 87-88.)  
 - Ps. 84:10 – “I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.”
- 16:41 – “on the next day” – One would think that the previous days judgment would be enough to deter the complaints of the congregation.  
 - “the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron” – Now the people are complaining against the judgment of God.
- 16:46 – “Take a censer” – This is the High Priest’s job. He is to serve for the benefit of the people.  
 - Aaron, at about 120 years old, is running among 2-3 million people.  
 - God here confirms Aaron as the High Priest by honoring his intercession on behalf of the people. (In Numbers 17, God will confirm his High Priest through the sign of resurrection.)
- 16:48 – “between the dead and the living” – This is exactly where our High Priest is standing.  
 - Aaron with the censer is a beautiful picture of intercession. (Rev. 5:8)
- 16:50 – “the plague had stopped” – By now, some are certainly letting Moses and Aaron have the rule.

## **Chapter 17:**

God will perform one more sign to indicate to the nation His choice for the priesthood.

- 17:2 – “twelve rods” – The rod of each ruler was the symbol of their authority.
- 17:4 – “before the Testimony” – The rods are placed before the veil separating the people from the Ark of the Covenant.

17:5 – “rid Myself of the complaints” – The idea is “to quiet in such a way that it will not rise again.”

17:8 – “almonds” – We are not told that it was from an almond tree to begin with.

- “yielded ripe almonds” – Fruitfulness is the best evidence of a divine call.
  - “The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing.” (Ps. 92:12-14)

17:10 – “kept as a sign” – Aaron’s rod is kept in the ark to minimize future rebellion.

- For this to be a sign, God must preserve the blossoms, bud, and fruit on the staff.
- Hebrews 9:4 says that the rod was placed within the Ark of the Covenant.

17:12 – “surely we die” – They are more shocked in this sign, than in the death and punishment of over 14,000 people. This rod bearing almonds is a sign of resurrection.

- “Lord, it is Your gentleness that has made me great.” (Ps. 18:35)

## **Chapter 18:**

The appropriate ways of approaching the Lord are detailed in chapters 18 and 19.

18:1 – “the Lord said to Aaron” – This is the only chapter in the Bible in which God speaks directly and solely to Aaron.

- After dealing with the rebellion and the accusations, God then turns His attention to the ministers who were targeted with the accusations.
- “your priesthood” – God is reconciling the priests with the Levites as well as reestablishing the Aaronic priesthood.
  - The rebellions of Kadesh Barnea and Korah do not dissolve the order of God.

18:7 – “gift” – The workers and the work are a gift from God.

- This is something Korah forgot. His place of responsibility was a privilege he despised in his desire to take the place of Aaron.

18:8 – “as a portion to you” – These are the provisions for the priests and the Levites.

- God is maintaining their provisions, even though the nation rebelled at Kadesh Barnea and was subsequently condemned to death.

18:15 – “redeem” – To redeem was to purchase back with money.

18:19 – “covenant of salt” – The salt speaks of something that endures the fire (as the Hebrews thought). The idea is that this is an enduring, or everlasting, covenant.

18:20 – “I am your portion” – God Himself will be their inheritance.

- Jacob prophesied in Genesis 49 that Levi would be scattered among their people. Yet because Aaron sided with Moses in Exodus 32, God will take them to Himself. In giving the Levites the cities of refuge while providing for their needs from the tithes of Israel, God fulfills both promises.

18:24 – “tithes” – These tithes are their provision and sustenance.

- The NT writers similarly argue that those who minister the word of God in the present period should also be paid suitably for their work. (1 Cor. 3:14; 9:3-12; Gal. 6:6-10; Phil. 4:10-19; 1 Tim. 5:17-18)

18:26 – “a tenth of the tithe” – The Levites will give a tithe of their tithes to the priests.

- The Levites were not exempted from the tithe despite their separate position.

### **Chapter 19:**

19:2 – “a red heifer” – The tabernacle was to be cleansed with a red heifer.

- There were only 9 red heifers in the history of Israel since Moses. They’d keep the ashes and only use a small amount at a time.
- There was a red heifer in Israel a few years back. The qualifications for the heifer being red was no more than 2 non-red hairs on the cow. (It was found out later that the heifer had more non-reds hairs than were allowable.)
- Certain Jews are still looking around the Essenes community for the ashes of a red heifer to cleanse the next temple.

19:6 – “cedar wood” – The wood is a type of the cross.

19:9 – “water of purification” – This is for consecration or cleansing from impurity.

- There must be a cleansing from death to enter the tabernacle.
- There will be between 1½ - 2 million people dying in the wilderness in the next 38 years; an average of over 100 dead per day for 38 years.

19:11 – “dead body” – God wanted His people to come face-to-face with death, and realize that death is a product of the fall and needs to be covered by sacrifice.

- God takes note of death. He could’ve just had them bury the dead and move on, but instead they have this ceremony.
- There is no death in our eternal state. Purification from death is why God is working in Israel in the first place...leading to the sacrifice of Jesus.

### **Chapter 20:**

This is God’s declaration that His plan and purposes continue unhindered despite the warfare, death, and/or failure of His leaders.

20:1 – “Kadesh” – This comes 38 years after their first stop at Kadesh Barnea and their refusal to enter the promised land. (Num 13:26)

- “Miriam” – She is 127 years old.
  - Moses (120), Aaron (123), and Miriam will all die in the same year.
  - Joshua is now 100 years old and Caleb is 77.

20:2 – “no water” – Moses might need water for purification.

- 20:3 – “If only we had died” – These are the grown-up children. They only know the wilderness. They don’t know Egypt, but they have had manna and a pillar of cloud/fire for 38 years. (Ps. 121:6)
- A new generation is learning who God is and what He does.
- “when our brethren died before the Lord” – They may be speaking of Korah’s rebellion, when the ground opened up to take them and the people ran away for their lives.
- 20:5 – “evil place” – They are standing across from the promised land once again.
- 20:6 – “the glory of the Lord appeared” – God doesn’t threaten to punish the people as He has done on previous occasions, evoking a response of mercy from Moses for the glory of God. This time Moses moves to attack the people and sully God’s glory.
- 20:8 – “water for them out of the rock” – These people probably don’t remember this the first time. (Exod. 17)
- The rock is a picture of Jesus Christ. “For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” (1 Cor. 10:4)
- 20:10 – “he said to them” – Moses was to speak to the rock, not to the people.
- “you rebels” – Moses is angry at the people. (Ps. 106:32-33)
  - “rebels” – The Greek word in the Septuagint is “moros.” He is calling them morons.
  - “we bring water for you” – Moses spoke as if he and God would do the job. His lapse into contempt for the people led him into a lapse of subtle pride.
- 20:11 – “rod” – This is probably Aaron’s rod with the buds and blossoms.
- “rock” – Lit. “lofty crag.” There was a different word for rock used in Exod. 17 which meant “a low-lying rock” which God Himself stood upon.
  - “water came out” – God doesn’t punish the people for the disobedience of the leader. You cannot measure the truthfulness of a minister/ministry based on “but God is using it.” God will use anything to reach His people.
  - Moses was the meekest man who ever lived. Meekness is power under control. Yet, his anger is a problem – Ex. 2:12, 11:8, 32:19, Num. 16, Ps. 106:22-23. Many times our strengths are also our greatest weakness.



20:12 – “you did not believe Me” – Moses’ lack of obedience is a demonstration of a personal lack of faith in God.

- Moses’ frustration, anger, and bitterness with the people lead him to misrepresent God to the people.
- “not bring the assembly into the land” – The punishment seems harsh. All this is for one mistake.
  - Moses was judged by a stricter standard. (James 3:1)
  - Moses will reach the promised land on the Mt. of Transfiguration and maybe in Rev. 11.
- “hallow Me” – Lit. “set apart.” Moses made God look like him.
  - Moses misrepresented God. Moses came straight from the tabernacle, so it seems that this is the way God is responding. Moses makes God look like every other person alive.
  - You will always misrepresent God if you do not tell the people what God has already said about Himself.
  - God cannot bless the minister with the promised land who cannot represent Him accurately in the wilderness.
  - God’s holiness is in His separateness. He has no equals. (Micah 7:18) Never formulate your opinion of who God is by the people you see, but only by His word about Himself.
  - The type: Moses, who represents the law, couldn’t get them into the promised land.
  - At the end of it all, God was seen as holy among the children of Israel. Moses did not hallow God in this incident, but God hallowed Himself through the correction of Moses. God will get His glory – from vessels of honor or vessels of dishonor.

20:14 – “brother” – Israel/Jacob and Esau/Edom were brothers. (Gen. 25:19-34)

- Edom, located on the eastern side of the Dead Sea will be punished for this treatment of Israel. (Amos 1:11; Obadiah 1:10)

20:17 – “please let us pass through” – They don’t just do in, they ask first.

- “king’s highway” – Later this became the Via Mare, the trade routes from North Africa to the Mediterranean along the Jordan Valley Rift.
  - Symbolically, this pictures the attempt of the spiritual to walk among the fleshly, while the flesh comes out against the spiritual. (Gal. 5 – “flesh lusts against the spirit...”) This is the battle within the believer.
  - We are to crucify, not reform, the old man.

20:21 – “Israel turned away from them” – Israel was forbidden by the Lord to take even a foothold in Edom. (Deut. 2:4-6)

20:24 – “rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah” – This is Aaron’s punishment for his representation of God at Meribah.

20:27 – “in the sight of all the congregation” – It seems that they know that Aaron is going to die on the mountain.

- 20:28 – “put them on Eleazar his son” – This is the transfer of the priesthood from Aaron to his son.
- We, as the royal priesthood, should pass the garments of faith onto our kids.
  - “Aaron died there” – After all Aaron has been through, including Egypt, the Red Sea, Sinai, Nadab and Abihu, etc. and still he doesn’t get into the promised land.
  - Aaron died in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt. (Num. 33:38)
  - “Moses and Aaron came down” – People come, people go...God’s work goes on.

20:29 – “mourned” – We weren’t created with the capacity to deal with death.

## **Chapter 21:**

This is at a time of great, corporate transition. Miriam has died. Aaron has died and been replaced. And Moses has failed and will be exiting as well.

21:1 – “on the road to Atharim” – This can also be translated “on the road of the spies.” It may look like Israel is going to reattempt to enter Canaan from Kadesh.

- “took some of them prisoners” – It seems as if Arad attacks the back of the camp.

21:3 – “utterly destroy their cities” – They were to be entirely given over to the Lord through destruction, as Jericho would later be designated.

- Sometimes, a society gets to be nearly unsalvageable. God predicted this in Gen. 9:20-28 and Gen. 15:16. The iniquity of the Amorites is becoming full.
- “Hormah” – It was at Hormah that Israel was defeated in their ill-advised attempt to enter the promised land by force after rejecting it by faith (Num. 14:45). Now God has brought them back to the same place, and given them the victory.

21:4 – “go around the land of Edom” – God doesn’t have them destroy Edom. Edom has Abraham’s blood in his veins.

21:5 – “against God...against Moses” – They are speaking against the two tables of the law.

- “no food and no water” – They are complaining despite the 9 million lbs. of manna per day and the water from a rock.
- Deut. 8:4 says their feet didn’t swell. Doctors say that swollen feet are an indication of an unbalanced diet. The manna was just what they needed.
- It’s not that there wasn’t food, there just wasn’t a menu.

21:6 – “fiery serpents” – These are even worse than regular snakes.

- There are different words for snakes in this passage: one is the normal word for snake, the other can be translated “dragon” and is the word used for Satan in the garden of Eden (Heb. “nachish”).
- “died” – We are not told how painfully, how slow, or how fast they died.

21:7 – “we have sinned” – They change their tune. God meets them at repentance.

- “pray unto the Lord” – They know these snakes are from God.
  - Escalaipus, a Greek deity at the time of Jesus, was symbolized by a snake wrapped around a pole and is now the symbol for the American Medical Association.
  - Jesus interprets this passage in John 3 (“as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also the Son of Man must be lifted up”) by paralleling the looking of the O.T. as the same as the believing of the N.T.
  - “Faith is the gaze of a soul upon a living/saving God” – A.W. Tozer.

21:8 – “make a fiery serpent” – Moses is to make this thing to look like that which plagued the people, as Jesus was made to be sin for us. (2 Cor. 5:21)

- “looks upon it, shall live” – They had to look by faith.

21:9 – “bronze” – This is a picture of God’s judgment of sin and rebellion.

21:10 – “Oboth” – There are interesting meanings and histories to each of these names.

21:14 – “wars of the Lord” – This is no longer an extant book.

- Deut. 2 speaks of Israel’s conflict with Moab, one of the children of Lot as well as the giants, the Emims and Zummins. These are strategic battles. This time they aren’t afraid to go after the giants.

21:16 – “Beer” – means “well.”

21:18 – “with their staves” – The water must be very close to the surface.

21:20 – “Pisgah” – It is possible to see Jericho from the top of Mt. Pisgah.

21:21 – “Amorites” – They are the strongest of the Canaanite tribes on both sides of the Jordon.

21:22 – “king’s highway” – This was part of the Via Mare trade route.

21:24 – “Ammon” – This is still the capital of Jordon today.

21:26 – “Sihon fought against the former king of Moab” – The Amorites beat Moab and Israel defeated the Amorites. This gives Moab something to be afraid of.

21:35 – “took possession of his land” – Deut. 3:4 speaks of the 60 cities of Og and the giants.

- Og, the king of Bashan, had a bed that was over 13 ft. long and 6 ft. wide. (Deut. 3:11)
- Deut. 1:4 and Josh. 13:30 also speaks of Og’s defeat at the hands of the Israelites.

## **Chapter 22:**

22:1 – “across from Jericho” – Israel is on the banks of the Jordon, with Jericho in view.

22:3 – “Moab was exceedingly afraid” – The Moabites had been defeated by the Amorites. And the Amorites had been defeated by Israel.

- Unknown to the Moabites, God had given orders to Israel not to contend with the Moabites. (Deut. 2:9)

- 22:5 – “send messengers to Balaam” – Balak realizes that his only recourse for victory over Israel is spiritual.
- The heat and the opposition get turned up on Israel, and they don’t even know it.
  - “Pethor...by the river” – This is located near the Euphrates which is over 360 miles from Moab.
    - Balaam was a diviner with an international reputation. One of Balaam’s non-Biblical prophecies is preserved in an Aramaic text from Deir Alla in the Jordan Valley dating to c. 700 BC.
  - “Balaam” – means “to swallow up, to waste, to devastate, or not of the people.”
  - “Peor” – means “to burn up.”
    - It seems they are better at cursing than blessing.
- 22:8 – “Lord” – (Heb. “Yahweh”) He is speaking of the covenant God of Israel.
- Balaam, at one place, calls the God of Israel “my God,” blesses Israel and yet at the same times seems to oppose God and His people.
  - He may be seeking Yahweh to see if he can get Israel’s God to turn against them, or he may be a true prophet of Jehovah that has chosen to abandon the authority of God for financial gain. (2 Pet. 2:18 and Jude 11)
  - Rev. 2:14 – “...the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.”
- 22:9 – “Who are these men with you?” – Wrong, improper associations and friendships have a lot to do with Balaam’s failure.
- 22:11 – “curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to overpower them” – Balak is realizing that he has no way of defeating Israel without supernatural help.
- 22:12 – “they are blessed” – God speaks of Israel according to their standing and not according to their present behavior and circumstances. (This is spoken as they are grumbling.)
- God is standing in the gap for Israel.
  - In Balaam’s three oracles: one speaks of Israel’s present standing, one of their past cleansing, and one of Israel’s future glory.
- 22:13 – “the Lord has refused to give me permission” – It seems as if Balaam is disappointed in God’s prevention. It is as if he is saying that, “God won’t let me go.”
- Balaam will not take a stand in obedience. He is not in agreement with God. He wants to disobey.
- 22:17 – “honor you greatly” – Balaam is a man with a price. He will walk with the Lord only until His price is offered.
- NT believers are no longer their own; they were bought with a price.
- 22:18 – “house full of silver and gold” – Balaam seems to be dropping a hint here.
- “Lord, my God” – Is Balaam for real here? There are many who claim God that are not claimed by God.
- 22:19 – “what more the Lord will say to me” – Balaam already knew. He is trying to manipulate the revealed word of God.
- “more” – Balaam wants to add to God’s word.
    - Balaam is a man with a divided heart.

22:20 – “If” – God gives a condition, but Balaam jumps ahead anyway.

- This seems to be God’s permissive will, but not exactly what God wants. God has given His will to Balaam, but Balaam so wants to go that God eventually “gives him over.” (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28)

22:22 – “anger” – Balaam is driven by greed and unrighteous money.

22:23 – “the donkey saw the angel” – The donkey has more insight into the spiritual realms than this prophet of Yahweh.

22:27 – “struck the donkey with his staff” – Balaam gets off and starts to beat his donkey.

22:28 – “the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey” – In some ways, the highest calling of any minister of the Lord is simply to be the donkey serving as the mouthpiece of Jehovah, simply saying what the Lord would have them say.

- This doesn’t say all that much about the vessel that God chooses to speak through.

22:29 – “now I would kill you” – What kind of man would kill a talking donkey?

- We tend to get angry when God hinders our disobedience.

22:30 – “And he said, ‘No’” – Balaam is losing an argument with a talking donkey.

- What are Balak’s servants thinking at this time?

22:32 – “perverse” – The idea is “headed for destruction.”

22:33 – “I would also have killed you by now, and let her live” – The donkey was selfless enough to take the beating and save its less perceptive rider.

22:35 – “only the word that I speak to you” – Balaam was well warned and Israel well protected even though don’t realize it.

- God is faithful to warn.

22:38 – “that I must speak” – This seems to be because of that angel.

22:41 – “observe the extent of the people” – Balak takes Balaam to a point where he can see an entire nation.

- The belief of the day was that you could curse a nation or an army if you could see all of it.

### **Chapter 23:**

23:1 – “altars” – Balaam will offer sacrifice, but later it is called divination (v. 23). This is augury; the sacrificing of an animal and pulling out the entrails to see a message.

23:4 – “I have prepared the seven altars” – It seems like Balaam is trying to cut a deal.

23:7 – “of the east” – The idea “by the river Euphrates.”

- 23:9 – “alone” – This prophecy still holds true to the day.
- A key to Israel’s power was their set-apart position.
  - God gives grace to forgive and He also gives grace to obey.
- 23:10 – “Let me die the death of the righteous” – Israel seems so blessed that Balaam gets jealous.
- You cannot die the death of the righteous without also living the life of the righteous. Christianity is not just good to die by, but it is also very good to live by.
- 23:11 – “What have you done to me?” – Balaam is learning quickly that one cannot please God and Balak at the same time.
- “blessed them altogether” – Balaam isn’t creating the blessing, but only confirming that which God has already stated.
- 23:13 – “another place” – Balak thinks it might be better cursing on another mountain while only seeing a part of the nation.
- 23:19 – “he should lie” – God isn’t going to change because the circumstances change.
- This lesson is for Balaam, too, who keeps trying to get God to change his mind.
- 23:21 – “shout of a king” – This is pointing to the Messiah.
- “not behold iniquity” – It is not that they don’t have iniquity, but only that God chooses not to see it.
  - This is especially wonderful because “God is not a man, that He should lie.” (v. 19)
- 23:22 – “wild ox” – This is possibly speaking of a rhinoceros.
- 23:23 – “no enchantment...divination” – If you’re God’s kids these things can’t get at you. Believers have been sealed with the Holy Spirit which means our dad is standing between us and their spiritual power.
- Spiritual warfare throughout the Bible: Zech. 3; Ezek. 18 – no ancestral sin; Mt. 16:18; 1 John 5:18 – evil one comes and touches us not.
  - “what hath God wrought” (KJV) – Samuel Morse sent this verse on the first telegraph message.
- 23:25 – “neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all” – Balak just wants Balaam to shut up.

## **Chapter 24:**

- 24:1 – “did not go as at other times” – He didn’t sacrifice to try to get a curse out this time.
- “sorcery” – Balaam was practicing divination.
- 24:2 – “according to their tribes” – They would’ve formed the shape of a cross from Balaam’s viewpoint with the tabernacle in their midst.
- “upon” – The Spirit came upon, but not within, Balaam.
- 24:3 – “eyes are open” – Balaam is actually seeing this vision.
- 1 Sam. 9:9 – The prophets were called seers before Samuel.
- 24:5 – “lovely are your tents, o Jacob” – This is God’s opinion, despite some of Israel’s behavior, and only God’s opinion really matters anyway.
- “He is not ashamed to be called our God...” (Heb. 11:16)

24:7 – “Agag” – This is either a specific future prophecy concerning the opponent of King Saul (1 Sam. 15:32-33), or Agag may be a common name among Amalekite kings and that there is an allusion here to the Amalekites who attacked Israel when they came out of Egypt (Exod. 17:8-13).

24:8 – “break their bones” – Balak has got to love this part.

24:9 – “cursed is he who curses you” – Balaam is now cursing Balak.

- The blessing of Israel has been since the beginning and it will hold until the end. (Gen. 12:3)

24:11 – “kept thee back from honor” – This is a lie straight for the garden of Eden. God brings no real loss of honor at all.

- God’s boundaries are not to prohibit us, but to protect us. They come from His love.

24:13 – “what the Lord says, that I must speak” – Balaam is acting noble to not lose his head.

24:14 – “I will advise you” – Balaam gives one more prophecy for free.

- “in days to come” – The distant and Messianic future is usually indicated by this expression.

24:17 – “a Star...a Scepter” – This prophecy comes over 1400 years before any of this is realized. He is looking to David and, ultimately, to Jesus.

- “Star” – Alluded to in Matt. 2:2.
- “Sceptre” – Alluded to from Gen. 49:10.
- “tumult” – (Heb. “Sheth”) This word carries the idea of “confusion, turmoil, or rebellion.”

24:20 – “Amalek” – They serve as a picture of the flesh-life throughout the Scriptures.

## **Chapter 25:**

Ch. 25 – Balaam knows how to get at the children of Israel from personal experience. He had walked under the power of God, but had come out from under His authority through the enticement of money. Now he is going to attempt to get Israel out from under the protection of God by luring them out from under His authority with sexual lust.

25:1 – “the people began to commit harlotry” – This is as God is protecting them from Balaam’s cursing.

25:3 – “joined himself” – It wasn’t forced.

- This is through the counsel of Balaam (Num. 31:15,16; 1 Cor. 10:8,9; Rev. 2:14). Balaam couldn’t get God to take His blessing off His people, so he got the people to come out from under the blessing of God. (Ps. 106:28-31)
- “Baal of Peor” – The temple of Baal worship was on Mt. Peor. (Num. 22:41)
- Baal was a fertility god worshipped through idol worship and sacrifice, but especially through deviate sexual relations. Baal is alive and well in the US. The pull for sexual sin is all over billboards, TV, movies, music, clothing styles, other people...

25:4 – “leaders of the people” – These are the leaders that left the people uncovered through sin and disobedience.

- “hang the offenders before the Lord” – They were to punish the leaders.
- “out in the sun” – God is asking them to bring it all into the light.
  - This comes as Israel is on the verge of the promised land again. Somehow, Satan has convinced them that there is something they will miss if they do it God’s way and walk in His authority and into His promises.

25:6 – “Midianite” – The Midianites were a nomadic group, and at this time, were in high numbers among the Moabites.

25:8 – “thrust both of them through” – Phinehas kills them both with the javelin.

- Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. (1 Sam. 15:23)
- This is the way to deal with sin within.
- What Egypt couldn’t do; what the armies of Canaan couldn’t do; what Balaam couldn’t do, the women of Moab did.

25:9 – “24,000” – 1 Cor. 10:8 says that 23,000 died in one day. But here we’re told that 24,000 died in totality.

25:11 – “Phinehas” – This name means “to blow away, or scatter the hissing of the serpent.”

25:12 – “peace” – Peace is the result of being zealous for the things of God.

25:13 – “priesthood” – The Aaronic priesthood goes through Phinehas.

- Believers zealous for God have a purifying effect on the congregation just as those who compromise have a negative effect.

25:14 – “Zimri” – means “to celebrate or to pluck on strings.”

- “Sallu” – means “exaltation.”

25:15 – “Cozbi” – means “deception, or lie.”

- “Zur” – means “adversary.”
  - Deception born of the adversary causes to exalt something God has put down.
  - Deception always happens slowly and subtly.

25:17 – “Harass the Midianites” – This is the punishment for this deception.

## **Chapter 26:**

“God counts all the people because all the people count.” If your name was in there, you would read it over and over again.

26:1 – “and Eleazar” – This is the first time God includes him now that Aaron has died. God honors His order.

26:2 – “Take a census” – This is the second census on the other side of Jordan, as Israel prepares for war with Moab.

- Tribal allotments will change as the numbers in the tribes have changed.



26:7 – “Reubenites” – They now number 43,730. Before they numbered 46,500, making for a decrease of 2,770.

26:10 – “Korah when that company died” – God gives them a reminder of Korah.

26:14 – “Simeonites” – They now number 22,200. Before they numbered 59,300, making for a decrease of 37,100.

- Simeon experiences the greatest decrease of all the tribes. Zimri was from the leaders of the tribe of Simeon. (Num. 25:14)

26:18 – “Gad” – They now number 40,500. Before they numbered 45,650, making for a decrease of 5,150.

26:22 – “Judah” – They now number 76,500. Before they numbered 74,600, making for an increase of 1,900.

26:25 – “Issachar” – They now number 64,300. Before they numbered 54,400, making for an increase of 9,900.

26:27 – “Zebulunites” – They now number 60,500. Before they numbered 57,400, making for an increase of 3,100.

26:34 – “Manasseh” – They now number 52,700. Before they numbered 32,200, making for an increase of 20,500.

- This is the greatest increase of all the tribes. Manasseh seems to be marked by faith. (Num. 27:1-11)

26:37 – “Ephraim” – They now number 32,500. Before they numbered 40,500, making for a decrease of 8,000.

26:41 – “Benjamin” – They now number 45,600. Before they numbered 35,400, making for an increase of 10,200.

26:42-43 – “Dan” – They now number 64,400. Before they numbered 62,700, making for an increase of 1,700.

26:47 – “Asher” – They now number 53,400. Before they numbered 41,500, making for an increase of 11,900.

26:50 – “Naphtali” – They now number 45,400. Before they numbered 53,400, making for a decrease of 8,000.

26:51 – “the children of Israel” – The total is now 601,730. Before they numbered 603,550, making for a decrease of 1,820.

- The wilderness journey has been marked by rebellion and disobedience, a time of refusing to take God at His Word; and as a result, it has been a time of decrease.
- During the 400 years of slavery in Egypt, Israel grew from 70 people to 2-3 million people. But over the last 40 years of wilderness wandering while in freedom they have decreased.

26:53 – “inheritance” – From Num. 26:52-27:11, the words “inherit” and “inheritance” are used 12 times.

26:56 – “according to the lot” – None of the lots will happen by accident. They are all given by God. (Prov. 16:33)

- The lots not only fall out according to the size of the tribes, but also according to the prophecies made by Jacob in Egypt over 400 years earlier.
- God, who sees the end from the beginning, places each tribe and individual where He sees fit and where is best for these persons.

26:57-62 – “Levites” – They now number 23,000. Before they numbered 22,000, making for an increase of 1,000.

- The Levites are not numbered with the rest of Israel because neither go to war or receive an inheritance with the rest of the nation.

26:65 – “not left a man of them, except Caleb...and Joshua” – Of the 603,550 men counted in Numbers 1, only 2 enter the promised land.

- There may be others from the tribe of Levi that also got in with Joshua and Caleb, like Eleazar. But they did not send any spies into the land and were not counted with the rest of the nation.

## **Chapter 27:**

27:1 – “daughters of Zelophehad” – These women stand in stark contrast to the faithless men of Israel.

27:2 – “stood before Moses” – They don’t complain and start a coup. They come to the leadership directly to settle this issue.

27:4 – “possession” – They are looking by faith to the promised land. They desire to enter the promises of God.

- They were determined and committed to their inheritance.

27:5 – “before the Lord” – This one, not being in the law, Moses had to take to God.

- The rule is, when it is not clearly spelled out in the Scriptures, pray!

27:11 – “family” – It was to stay in their families according to their tribes.

- The land was never to be subsumed by a central government.

27:12 – “Mount Abarim” – This is a mountain range with Mount Nebo/Mount Pisgah (different names for the same mountain) as the highest point of the range.

- “see the land” – God isn’t teasing Moses with the land. Moses begs God to get him into the promised land, but God refuses to bargain with Moses (Deut. 3:24-28). Yet God shows Moses the land (Deut. 34:1-7) and Moses sees the land inhabited, Dan relocated, and over 100 miles from where he is standing. It is supernatural.

- 27:13 – “seen it” – As Moses supernaturally sees the promised land, so we too supernaturally look to heaven. Heaven is waiting.
- “Eye has not seen...But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.” (1 Cor. 2:9-10)
  - “Set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Col. 3:2)
  - “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” (Matt. 6:20)
  - “For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” (Heb. 11:10)
  - “gathered to his people” – God says that Moses will be gathered, not that Moses is going to die. God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.
- 27:14 – “against My command to hallow Me” – Moses, because of his anger, didn’t sanctify God to the people.
- Like the Law, one sin keeps Moses out of the land.
  - Moses, representing the law, couldn’t get the people into the promised land. But Joshua, giving us a picture of Jesus, could and did.
- 27:16 – “spirits of all flesh” – The Mormons have developed their theology of the eternality and divinity of humanity from this one verse.
- “set a man over the congregation” – Moses’ only concern seems to be for the congregation – for the people and not for himself.
- 27:17 – “sheep which have no shepherd” – Moses looks to the well-being of God’s people even when he wouldn’t live to see the physical rewards. It is God’s heart to look out for His sheep.
- “I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.” (Jer. 3:15)
- 27:18 – “Joshua” – His name means “Jehovah is salvation.”
- Joshua was Moses’ assistant. (Exod. 24:13)
  - Joshua was one of the two spies (along with Caleb) that gave a favorable report of Canaan. (Num. 13:8; 14:6-10)
  - “a man in whom is the Spirit” – Joshua is given the spiritual endowment requisite for the office he is called to fill.
  - Joshua’s qualification is his relationship to God. It is not that he is the best educated, but it is “by My Spirit.” (Zech. 4:6) Seminaries, for many, replace faith in being prepared for ministry.
- 27:19 – “inaugurate him in their sight” – Moses is publicly announcing his successor.
- 27:21 – “stand before Eleazar” – God changes how He relates to the leadership as the leadership changes. Instead of talking “mouth to mouth” with Moses, He chooses to talk to the priest and the priest will relay the word to Joshua.

## **Chapter 28:**

28:2 – “My...Me...” – 5 times. This becomes very personal to the Lord.

- Moses reiterates some of the sacrificial system for the next generation. They must realize the importance of sacrifice and God’s presence in their midst.
- This is, in a way, a returning to their “first love.” (Rev. 2:4) The promised land without the presence of the Lord is meaningless for us and for Him.
- “My offering” – When we give to God, we are only giving him what is already His. Therefore, any attitude that gives to get is missing the reality of the giving.
- “sweet savor” – This phrase is used 11 times in Ch. 28-29. It literally can be translated “a savor of rest.”

28:3 – “offer to the Lord” – Sacrifice and substitutionary atonement are central to the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.

- Any teaching on the purpose of our lives that does not keep the death of Jesus Christ, His substitutionary atonement for us, and our relationship with Him through faith as central focus of its teaching will lead us into selfishness and destruction.

28:4 – “in the morning...in the evening” – Israel would begin and end the day with sacrifice.

28:9 – “on the Sabbath” – The Sabbath offerings add two lambs to the regular daily sacrifices.

28:16 – “Passover of the Lord” – The feasts begin with the Passover.

28:26 – “day of the firstfruits...Feast of Weeks” – This is Pentecost.

## **Chapter 29:**

29:1 – “day of blowing the trumpets” – This is the Feast of Trumpets. (Rosh Hashanah)

29:7 – “tenth day of the seventh month” – This is the Day of Atonement. (Yom Kippor.)

- On this day, the High Priest would sacrifice all of the 30+ offerings by himself with no help from any of the other priests.

29:12 – “fifteenth day of the seventh month” – This is the Feast of Tabernacles.

- Note, the number of animals sacrificed each day was around 25-30 animals.

## **Chapter 30:**

Vows are our way of guaranteeing something. But our word is only as good as what backs it up.

Oaths are an indication on the part of the person making the oath of the realization that they need to appeal to an outside source so that they can be trusted. And the Jews took this chapter and turned it into an obscure composition of vows (as in Matt. 23). Jesus said rather on the Sermon on the Mount, “Let your yes be yes and your no, no.” (Matt. 5:37)

- How many in the church try to get us to make pledges and commitments?
- It is better to not make a vow, than to make a vow and not keep it. (Eccl. 5:5; Prov. 20:25)
- Jesus answered under oath in court (Matt. 26:63-64) and God swears oaths (Luke 1:73; Acts 2:30; Heb. 3:18; 6:13,17)

30:2 – “not break his word” – Truth is what binds a society together.

30:3 – “if a woman makes a vow” – If a wife or daughter make a vow, it can be overridden by the husband or dad.

- God is upholding the given order of the family. Otherwise the vows could contradict obligation (like the use of the “corban” spoken of in Matt. 15:4-6).
- God is also reinforcing the importance of communication within the home.

30:4 – “her father holds his peace” – Silence is implicit permission.

30:5 – “her father overruled her” – This is not teaching subjection, but a pattern of responsibility.

- God never grants authority without accountability.

30:15 – “then he shall bear her guilt” – If the man changes his mind, he bears the iniquity.

### **Chapter 31:**

31:2 – “afterward you shall be gathered to your people” – Moses’ last public duty for the nation of Israel is to lead them against the Midianites.

- There is work and warfare until we die.
- “Blessed are those who die in the Lord...they shall rest from their labors.” (Rev. 14:13)

31:3 – “vengeance for the Lord” – This is a holy war. (Num. 25:16-18)

- God says “Vengeance is Mine.” (Rom. 12:19)
- This is not a proof-text for the Crusades, ancient or modern.

31:5 – “one thousand from each tribe” – Merely 12,000 of the 600,000+ men go to war.

- The Midianites had 135,000 men in the battle with Gideon.

31:6 – “holy articles” – We are not sure exactly what these were; (maybe the ark of the testimony).

- They were not led by a general, but by a priest.

31:7 – “all the males” – But not one of the Israelites dies (31:49). This is supernatural.

- Also note all the spoil that was taken. (v. 32-46)

31:8 – “Balaam” – Balaam, who wanted to die the death of the righteous (23:10), choose instead to side with the Moabites. So he suffered the consequences.

- Balaam was killed by those he caused to stumble.
- “Zur” – He was the father of Cozbi, the woman with whom Zimri had sinned in the camp of Israel. (Num. 25:14-15)

31:10 – “forts” – These are the villages.

31:12 – “across from Jericho” – They are closer to realizing the promises than the nation has ever been.

31:14 – “angry” – Moses is angry again.

31:16 – “these women caused the children of Israel...to trespass” – These women are more dangerous than the armed men. Not one person died in battle, but 24,000 died in compromise.

- The Law said both the adulterer and the adulteress must die for their sin. God had put to death the adulterers of Israel by the plague, and now it is fitting that the adulteresses of Israel should be put to death by the sword.

- 31:17 – “kill every” – Jesus’ attitude toward those who would hurt or cause His people to stumble is for the offender to have a millstone placed around his neck and thrown into the sea.
- 31:18 – “not known a man” – These have never given themselves over to Baal sexually.
- These are harsh punishments, but the Canaanites were filthy. (Gen. 15:16) This purging is to preserve the nation from the moral (idolatry) and physical (sexually transmitted diseases) maladies of the Midianites.
- 31:19 – “remain outside” – God reveals his heart here as He declares the uncleanness of the execution. He does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked. (Ezek. 33:11)
- 31:23 – “put through the fire” – All that could endure the fire should pass through the fire. All that couldn’t endure the fire should be washed for purification.
- 31:27 – “divide the plunder into two parts” – Half goes to those who fought and half goes to the rest of Israel. (And a small portion goes to the Lord.)
- The many are blessed because of the bravery of the few.
- 31:28-30 – “one of every five hundred...one of every fifty” – The soldiers were commanded to bring one person or animal out of five hundred and the congregation was to bring one person or animal out of the fifty, which totaled 8,400 items.
- 31:32 – “the booty” – This is the spoil.
- 31:34 – “donkeys” – Did one of these donkeys speak?
- 31:49 – “not a man of us is missing” – Not one died.
- 31:50 – “offering” – They recognize and respond to the Lord’s hand in this battle.

## **Chapter 32:**

- 32:1 – “the land of Gilead” – Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh will forsake Canaan for Gilead.
- Gilead is as close as they can get to the promised land without actually getting in.
  - “livestock” – They are basing their decision on what seems easy and profitable.
  - They pass it up for cattle and sheep; settling for less than God’s best. The promised land is a land flowing with milk and honey. There would be plenty for their cattle as well.
- 32:5 – “do not take us over” – They don’t want to go into the promised land and all the promises made to Israel.
- They are guilty of compromise: Settling outside the promised land. They will fight the wars of Canaan and not enjoy its blessings. They are satisfied with spiritual mediocrity.
  - Christians are going against the flow of all the world, the flesh, and the devil. Trying to stand still in the midst of that puts us into a dangerous place.
  - Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh believe they know what is best for their lives.
  - “That any Israelite tribe should consider settling outside the land promised to Abraham showed a disturbing indifference to the divine word, the word on which Israel’s existence entirely depended” – Wenham.

- 32:7 – “discourage” – Compromise and mediocrity affect others.
- Moses did not confront them on the issue of their settling outside the land. If a child of God is content to settle for less in their Christian life, there is little or nothing one can do. But when their complacency begins to affect their brothers and sisters, it must be confronted.
- 32:6 – “Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here?” – Do you care so little for your brethren that you would allow them to fight while you sat comfortably in what they fought to provide you with?
- 32:8 – “thus your fathers did” – The first time, 10 of the 12 spies kept Israel out of the promised land. Here, 2 ½ tribes seem to be turning back.
- Moses is giving them a warning.
- 32:11 – “they have not wholly followed Me” – Rejecting God’s promises is rejecting God.
- 32:14 – “in your fathers’ place” – They are chips off the old block.
- 32:16 – “for our little ones” – They almost sound noble. They talk of protecting their families, meeting their needs, and providing financially...but still they settle. No matter how good it sounds for our family, falling short of full obedience to God will prove to be their destruction more quickly than in fighting the battles of the Lord.
- Reuben, Gad, and ½ Manasseh were also the first to turn from God and the first to be taken in battle (Josh. 22; 2 Kings 15:29). What seemed easy at first, proved to be their destruction.
- 32:17 – “because of the inhabitants of the land” – They are admitting that the land they are settling in is unsafe for their families.
- 32:23 – “take note” – Lit. “consider this.”
- “your sin will find you out” – This is a sin of omission, not doing something they knew they should.
  - Some men’s sins will come into the light now, some follow behind to be revealed later. None are truly hidden.
- 32:33-42 – “the cities of the surrounding country” – This is the listing of the cities of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

### **Chapter 33:**

- 33:4 – “on their gods” – The plagues of Egypt were also on their gods (proving to Israel that those gods were not the true and living God).
- 33:8 – “the midst of the sea” – It doesn’t say they passed along the edge of a swamp.
- There are 40 names along this wilderness journey between Egypt and Moab. Included are: Marah...Elim...Rephidim...Sinai...Kibroth-hattaavah...
  - Deut. 2:7 – Israel lacked no good thing in all of their journeys.
- 33:18 – “Hazereth...Rithma” – There is no record of their first stop at Kadesh Barnea. (Num. 12:16)

- 33:38 – “Aaron...died” – God takes note of the death of Aaron.
- God takes note of the day Aaron died to teach the rest of the nation that man doesn’t live by bread (the natural strength) alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. (Deut. 8:2-5)
- 33:49 – “Beth Jesimoth...Abel Acacia Grove” – This is a 7-8 mile stretch along the Jordan.
- 33:52 – “engraved stones” – These were sexual, pornographic, and idolatrous images.
- “destroy” – (Heb. “abad”) This is where we get the word ‘Abaddon’ from.
  - If they would keep themselves pure from the idols of Canaan, God would enrich them with the wealth of Canaan.
- 33:53 – “dispossess” – There are going to be fights and enemies in the promised land.
- Part of possessing the promises is dispossessing the enemies.
  - We are all going to have battles. The question is whether we will fight the battles of the promised land and be able to enjoy the fruit of the labor when the battle is over or if we will remain outside the promises of God for fear of warfare and have to continually fight off the enemies at that point with no real hope of enjoying the fruit of the labor.
- 33:54 – “larger...smaller” – The size of the land is according to the size of the tribe.
- “falls to him by lot” – The lot will fall according to God’s will and according to Jacob’s prophecy in Genesis 49.
- 33:55 – “thorns in your sides” – The faltering of the promised land will be self-inflicted. They will come from those they permit to remain in the land.
- “they shall harass you” – Either Israel will drive the enemy out or the enemy will drive Israel crazy. The two cannot live together amicably.
  - God doesn’t give warnings purposelessly. Unfortunately, Israel didn’t obey God’s orders and ended up being snared by the practices of the heathen peoples left in the land. (Judges 2:6-15)

## **Chapter 34:**

- 34:1 – “when you come into the land” – God is defining His promises to the generation that will walk in and possess them.
- 34:2 – “as an inheritance” – Inheritances are freely given, not earned.
- “boundaries” – The listing of the four boundaries is not only for information, but also to display again the dimensions of God’s great gift to his people.
- 34:3 – “southern border” – The southern border runs south of the Dead Sea to the Brook of Egypt.
- 34:6 – “western border” – The Mediterranean Sea the western border.
- 34:7 – “northern border” – The northern border runs from the Mediterranean west to the desert north of the Sea of Galilee.
- 34:10 – “eastern border” – The Jordan River is the eastern boundary.



34:13 – “shall inherit by lot” – They never fully realized this land, although they came closest under David and Solomon. (Deut. 11:24; Josh. 15:63; 16:10; 17:11-13; Judges 1:21-35; and 2 Chron. 9:26)

34:14 – “have received” – That is all they get.

34:17 – “the names of the men who shall divide the land” – God handpicks these men. He knows them and their fathers.

- A new generation of leaders must be raised up because the first set of leaders died in disobedience in the wilderness.

## **Chapter 35:**

Cities of refuge and towns for the Levites.

35:7 – “cities you will give to the Levites” – Spread all across the map of Israel (like a preservative throughout Israel) are 48 cities for the Levites.

- Jacob prophesied that Levi would be scattered among his brothers, but God picked Levi for His service in Ex. 32. They both come true in this arrangement.

35:9 – “cities of refuge” – A city of refuge was always only a half-day’s journey from any point in the land. (Deut. 19:3; Josh. 20:7-8)

35:12 – “avenger of blood” – The person who had the responsibility of killing the person who killed a relative.

- Nomadic cultures use this as a means of peace-keeping, because of the mobility of the people. There aren’t districts and areas to guard and patrol like we have in our culture.
- This still goes on in some cultures. We sometimes call it terrorism, but to them it isn’t barbaric, it is an honor and a responsibility.
- “avenger” – (Heb. “gaal”) Lit. “kinsman.” The avenger of blood was another of the responsibilities of the kinsman-redeemer.

35:15 – “for the stranger” – The same thing applies to the Jew and the Gentile.

- “kills a person accidentally” – The cities of refuge are only for involuntary manslaughter.

35:16-19 – “he is a murderer” – God defines the difference between murder and involuntary manslaughter.

- Capital punishment backs the setting up of human government. (Gen. 9:6)
- To leave a voluntary murder un-avenged would bring shame on the entire family.

35:22 – “without enmity” – This was not done on purpose.

35:25 – “unto the death of the high priest” – The shedding of blood required blood to be shed. So if the killing was accidental, it would be the death of the High Priest that would cover the death of the slain.

- This is a beautiful picture of being set free at the death of our High Priest, Jesus Christ. “We...have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.” (Heb. 6:18)

35:27 – “outside the limits of the city” – Refuge is only found in the city.

- Protection was found in, not only knowing there was a city of refuge, but in actually going into it and remaining there.

35:31 – “no ransom for the life of the murderer” – They were not to receive bribes. None that are guilty are to get off.

35:34 – “in the midst of which I dwell” – It is God’s presence that sets this land apart.

- God will not allow the promised land to be stained with innocent blood. And the only way to cleanse that blood is to execute with equal measure those who killed the innocent.

### **Chapter 36:**

The word “inheritance” is used 17 times in this chapter alone.

36:4 – “inheritance will be taken away” – If Zelophehad’s daughters marry a man from another tribe, then in the year of Jubilee the land would be lost to the other tribe. This would divide the land and their inheritance. (Num. 27:1-11)

36:6 – “what the Lord commands” – This is where we run when we have a question like this. Go to the Lord rather than to all the other people.

- “marry only within the family” – If they want to remain with their father’s inheritance, they are to marry inside their tribe.
- There are some that are not closely related, but still belong to the same tribe.

36:11 – Mahlah – means “disease.”

- Tirzah – means “pleasantness, or favorable”
- Hoglah – means “council, or partridge.”
- Milcah – means “queen.”
- Noah – means “rest.”

36:13 – “by the hand of Moses” – This ascribes authorship to Moses.