



WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

AUGUST 5, 2026
NUMBERS - LESSON 18

First Baptist Church | Covington, Louisiana

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Theological Insight from Numbers **Chapters 1 - 15**

The Book of Numbers is the third of five books written by Moses and called ***"The Pentateuch"*** (five books) or ***"The Books of the Law."***

The Hebrew name for Numbers is "In the wilderness" which comes from the first verse in the book. This is a good descriptive name which literally describes the events which occurred during Israel's wilderness wanderings.

The book covers the time period of the second year to the fortieth year ***Deuteronomy 1:3*** *And in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the people of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him in commandment to them.*

Numbers describe the wilderness wandering in three areas and time periods:

Chapters 1:1–10:10 What happened at Sinai

Chapters 10:11–20:13 What happened in the wilderness

Chapters 20:14–36:13 What happened from Kadesh to the Plains of Moab

The book gets its English name from the census which numbered all the people over 20 years of age who were able to go forth to war. ***Numbers 1:2-3*** *"Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, by families, by fathers' houses, according to the number of names, every male, head by head; ³from twenty years old and upward, all in Israel who are able to go forth to war, you and Aaron shall number them, company by company.*

NUMBERS 1:1–10:10 What happened at Sinai

Numbers 1 The number of fighting men to be 603,550.

***1:44-50** These are those who were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered with the help of the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each representing his fathers' house. ⁴⁵So the whole number of the people of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war in Israel - ⁴⁶their whole number was six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.*

⁴⁷But the Levites were not numbered by their ancestral tribe along with them. ⁴⁸For the LORD said to Moses, ⁴⁹"Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, and you shall not take a census of them among the people of Israel; ⁵⁰but appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings, and over all that belongs to it; they are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall tend it, and shall encamp around the tabernacle.

Numbers 2 describes how the people encamped with the Tent of Meeting in the middle and three tribes on each side. This chapter also describes the marching order of the tribes.

Numbers 2:1-2 *The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ² "The people of Israel shall encamp each by his own standard, with the ensigns of their fathers' houses; they shall encamp facing the tent of meeting on every side.*

³ *Those to encamp on the **east side** toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah by their companies ... ⁵ Those to encamp next to him shall be the tribe of Issachar ... ⁷ Then the tribe of Zebulun ... ⁹ The whole number of the camp of Judah, by their companies, is a hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred. They shall set out first on the march.*

¹⁰ *"On the **south side** shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben by their companies ... ¹² And those to encamp next to him shall be the tribe of Simeon ... ¹⁴ Then the tribe of Gad ... ¹⁶ The whole number of the camp of Reuben, by their companies, is a hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and fifty. They shall set out second.*

¹⁷ *"Then the **tent of meeting** shall set out, with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; as they encamp, so shall they set out, each in position, standard by standard.*

¹⁸ *"On the **west side** shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim by their companies ... ²⁰ And next to him shall be the tribe of Manasseh ... ²² Then the tribe of Benjamin ... ²⁴ The whole number of the camp of Ephraim, by their companies, is a hundred and eight thousand one hundred. They shall set out third on the march.*

²⁵ *"On the **north side** shall be the standard of the camp of Dan by their companies ... ²⁷ And those to encamp next to him shall be the tribe of Asher ... ²⁹ Then the tribe of Naphtali ... ³¹ The whole number of the camp of Dan is a hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred. They shall set out last, standard by standard."*

³² *These are the people of Israel as numbered by their fathers' houses; all in the camps who were numbered by their companies were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. ³³ But the Levites were not numbered among the people of Israel, as the LORD commanded Moses.*

³⁴ *Thus did the people of Israel. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so they encamped by their standards, and so they set out, every one in his family, according to his fathers' house.*

Numbers 3-4 describes the numbers and duties of the Levites.

3:5 *And the LORD said to Moses, ⁶ "Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister to him. ⁷ They shall perform duties for him and for the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, as they minister at the tabernacle; ⁸ they shall have charge of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and attend to the duties for the people of Israel as they minister at the tabernacle. ⁹ And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the people of Israel. ¹⁰ And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but if any one else comes near, he shall be put to death."*

4:46 *All those who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel numbered, by their families and their fathers' houses, ⁴⁷ from thirty years old up to fifty years old, every one that could enter to do the work of service and the work of bearing burdens in the tent of meeting, ⁴⁸ those who were numbered of them were eight thousand five hundred and eighty.*

⁴⁹ *According to the commandment of the LORD through Moses they were appointed, each to his task of serving or carrying; thus they were numbered by him, as the LORD commanded Moses.*

Numbers 5-6 describes the vow of the Nazarite.

The word come from the Hebrew verb meaning “to separate.” Being a Nazarite meant to separate oneself from wine and strong drink, from a razor to cut his hair, and from touching a dead body. This vow could be for a set period of time.

The end of this chapter contains the beautiful Aaronite Benediction:

6:22-26 *The LORD bless you and keep you: ²⁵ The LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you: ²⁶ The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.*

Numbers 7 describes the dedication offering for the Tabernacle. This concludes with Moses hearing the voice of the LORD speaking from above the Mercy Seat. God’s presence was thought to be between the Cherubim who guard the holiness of God and above the Mercy Seat on the Ark.

Isaiah 6:1-5 & Ezekiel 1:4-2:10

Numbers 8 is the purification of the Israelites

Numbers 9 contains the prescription for keeping *The Passover* and the description of God’s leading the people with fire and cloud.

Numbers 10:1-10 describes the making of two silver trumpets to summon the people.

Numbers 11 Lists the complaints of the people. The “Rabble” may have been from the mixed multitude which came out with Israel.

11:1 *And the people complained in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes; and when the LORD heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some outlying parts of the camp. ² Then the people cried to Moses; and Moses prayed to the LORD, and the fire abated. ³ So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the LORD burned among them.*

⁴ *Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving; and the people of Israel also wept again, and said, “O that we had meat to eat!*

God called Moses to gather 70 elders upon whom the He would give part of Moses’ spirit to help him lead the people.

11:16 *And the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. ¹⁷ And I will come down and talk with you there; and I will take some of the spirit which is upon you and put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone.*

Numbers 12 Miriam and Aaron rebel against Moses.

12 *Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman; ² and they said, “Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?” And the LORD heard it. ³ Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all men that were on the face of the earth. ⁴ And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting.” And the three of them came out. ⁵ And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the door of the tent, and called Aaron*

and Miriam; and they both came forward. ⁶ And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. ⁷ Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. ⁸ With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech; and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

⁹ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed; ¹⁰ and when the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. And Aaron turned towards Miriam, and behold, she was leprous. ¹¹ And Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, do not^[a] punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned. ¹² Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb." ¹³ And Moses cried to the LORD, "Heal her, O God, I beseech thee." ¹⁴ But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut up outside the camp seven days, and after that she may be brought in again."

Numbers 13 The sending of spies into the land and their evil report.

¹⁷ Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, "Go up into the Negeb yonder, and go up into the hill country, ¹⁸ and see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, ¹⁹ and whether the land that they dwell in is good or bad, and whether the cities that they dwell in are camps or strongholds, ²⁰ and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there is wood in it or not. Be of good courage, and bring some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes. ²¹ So they went up and spied out the land.

Numbers 14 contains the "faith report" of Joshua, Caleb, and Moses' intercession for the people. And the people's presumption and defeat.

²⁰ Then the LORD said, "I have pardoned, according to your word; ²¹ but truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD, ²² none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs which I wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the proof these ten times and have not hearkened to my voice, ²³ shall see the land which I swore to give to their fathers; and none of those who despised me shall see it. ²⁴ But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it.

Number 15 contains laws concerning offerings.

Notice the offering was for an "unwitting sin."

15:27 "If one person sins unwittingly, he shall offer a female goat a year old for a sin offering. ²⁸ And the priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who commits an error, when he sins unwittingly, to make atonement for him; and he shall be forgiven. ²⁹ You shall have one law for him who does anything unwittingly, for him who is native among the people of Israel, and for the stranger who sojourns among them.

The person commits sin with a "high hand", i.e., deliberately shall be cut off.

15:30-31 But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from among his people. ³¹ Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him."