

### NUMBERS

**PURPOSE** To understand that even though the people of Israel were enjoying the provision and protection of God, disobedience and unbelief prevented them from entering the promised land of Canaan.

**Memory Verse Numbers 14:22, 23 & 20:12**

*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, shall see the land which I swore to give to their fathers; and none of those who despised me shall see it.*

*And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “because you did not believe in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them”.*

### INTRODUCTION

Since two censuses were taken during the course of this book, the name is very appropriate. Censuses were taken to decide the number of people who would be placed in the army. This book explains the story of the people of Israel wandering through the wilderness. In the wilderness the people of Israel received the protection and leadership of God. However due to their unbelief and disobedience a journey which could have been completed in eleven days became the wandering of forty years through the wilderness.

Because of murmuring and disobedience most of the people who started from Egypt died in the wilderness. Only the new generation was permitted to enter the promised land of Canaan. Genesis gives the account of creation; Exodus explains the story of redemption and Leviticus gives the order of worship. Numbers should have been the story the redeemed people walking with God and having fellowship with Him. But the redeemed people failed to walk with God. When a group of people fail in their walk with God He will always raise up another group to inherit the promises.

The book of Numbers is also known as “Vayedaber” meaning God Spoke. This name is given on the basis of Hebrew 1:1. Also it is known as “Bemidbar” meaning “in the wilderness”. In Greek the book is known as “Arithmoi” meaning numbers and in Latin it is known as “Liber Numeri” meaning “the book of numbers”. Some theologians call it “the book of journey” and “the book of murmuring”.

#### **AUTHOR- Moses**

The evidences that are given for the first three books are also applicable to the book of Numbers.

#### **PERIOD OF WRITING B.C. 1450 - 1410 (Period in the wilderness)**

Leviticus gives the history of the people of Israel for one month. But the book of

Numbers gives the history of the people of Israel for 39 years (B.C. 1444 – 1405). After the Israelites left Egypt on the first day of the second month, they came and camped at Sinai on the 20th day. That is 20 days (Numbers 1:1). After wandering through the wilderness, they arrived at Moab (22:1, 26:3, 32:13, 33:50, Deut. 1:3). In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses proclaimed to the Israelites all that the Lord commanded him concerning them. The period of recording this book is about forty years (32:33): to Mount Sinai 20 days, in the Wilderness 38 years 3 months 10 days, to Moab 5 months.

#### **CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF NUMBERS**

The best shadow of Christ in the book of numbers is the “bronze serpent”. (Num.21:4 – 8, John 3:14) Water from the smitten rock will quench spiritual thirst of those who are following Him. The rock (Christ) is the one who believers will follow in their spiritual walk (1Cor. 10:4). Manna always gives satisfaction to those who eat it. Christ became the bread of life for us (Num.11:7-8, John. 6:32-33). The city of refuge (Num. Ch. 35, Heb. 6:18) is a shadow of Christ. The Pillar of fire and clouds is shadow of Christ who leads, guides and protects His followers.

## **MAIN TOPIC**

Disobedience and unbelief prevented the Israelites from having fellowship with God and attaining the promise.

## **OBSERVATION ABOUT THE BOOK OF NUMBERS**

The history recorded in the book of numbers begins on the 13th month after the people of Israel left Egypt. Numbers explains the punishment the Israelites received because of their careless and disobedient activities. Through 40 years of guidance and teaching after the period of bondage in Egypt they became a people ready to receive the promised land. Numbers start with an old generation (1:1 - 10:10). They are driven through hard changes. Numbers end with a new and changed generation (26:36).

## **OLD GENERATION**

The people of Israel were delivered from Egypt through miracles. With divine protection God brought them to Sinai to receive the Law (1:1 – 10:10). The commandments of God are straightforward and in proper order. They are to be followed in all walks of life. God who is omniscient, is the designer and perfect planner. There is no place for disharmony or problems in His plan. Looking at the design of the Tabernacle and placement each Tribe's tent in the camp is an example of the order God desires. Internal and external aspects of the Tabernacle, the camp site, and how they are to begin their journey are other examples of perfect order.

## **SORROWFUL END OF THOSE STARTED FROM EGYPT**

Israel in their journey to the land of Canaan followed God. However, God was displeased because of their murmuring. While at Kadesh spies were to assess the land. All this displeased God and the generation that came out of Egypt was not able to possess that land. The spies took 40 days to assess the land. At the ratio of 1 day to 1 year, the people of Israel wandered for 40 years. Except Caleb and Joshua the rest of the generation died in the wilderness. There is no detailed account about these wandering years in the book.

## **NEW GENERATION**

When the generation was prepared and ready, they were brought back to the land Moab which is east of the land of promise (22:1). Before they entered the promised land of Canaan the people had to be prepared in all ways. Therefore, they were given the commandments again and censuses were taken again. At that time Moses appointed Joshua as the next leader. Some of the tribes settled east of the Jordan River.

Two type of generation in censuses	Num. 1 - 14 & Num. 21 – 26
Two censuses	Num. 1 & Num. 26
Two journeys	Num.10 – 14 & Num. 21-27
Two instructions	Num. 5 – 9 & Num. 28 - 36

The mercy and righteousness of God is recorded here (Rom.11:22). The people of God have to believe and depend upon God in order to prosper in all walks of life.

There are 36 chapters in this book.

### **Questions**

1. Why is the name Numbers appropriate for this book?
2. List different names given to this book and the meaning of those names.
3. Describe the period in which this book was written.
4. How is Christ revealed in this book?
5. How is the content of this book divided and explain.
6. There are pairs of different matters in this book. Name them.