

# NUMBERS

## INTRODUCTION

### TITLE AND CONTENTS

The fourth book in the Pentateuch is Numbers, so named because of the census-taking activities it records. This name originates from the Septuagint Greek translation, which called the book *arithmoi*, “numbers;” the Jews ordinarily termed the book בְּמִדְבָּר (*b<sup>2</sup>midbar*), “in the wilderness,” a phrase taken from the first verse.<sup>1</sup>

The Hebrew title seems fitting, as the theme of Numbers is the wilderness experience of Israel. The trek from Sinai to Canaan that should have required but a few months at most was extended to a period of nearly forty years by the people’s disobedience, a time that allowed the passing of one generation and the maturation of the next one.<sup>2</sup> Although the book contains considerable legislation, it is primarily a historical narrative, which combines a wide variety of textual materials from statistics and lists to poetry and even prophecy. Thus while Leviticus contains some history but is mostly legislative, Numbers alternates between history and law, but is predominantly historical.<sup>3</sup>

After relating Israel’s last days at Sinai and the start of her journey to Canaan, the book documents Israel’s tragic rebellion, the great delay it caused, and the subsequent renewal, in the next generation, of the march toward promised Canaan. Thus while the his-

---

<sup>1</sup>Jewish tradition affirms the traditional English title of the book as “Numbers” (*m. Yoma* 7:1).

<sup>2</sup>D.T. Olson views the book of Numbers to be structured around the idea of the two generations (*The Death of the Old and the Birth of the New: The Framework of the Book of Numbers and the Pentateuch* [Chico: Scholar’s, 1985]). See below.

<sup>3</sup>On the alternating sections of story and law, see Mary Douglas, *In the Wilderness: The Doctrine of Defilement in the Book of Numbers* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), pp. 102ff. See below.

tory is marred by sinfulness, its greater emphasis is upon preparation and the LORD's redemptive purpose.

## STRUCTURE AND SETTING

Without necessarily accepting David Dorsey's contention that the literary structure of the "book of the law" extends to a hexateuch including Joshua, one may appreciate his threefold analysis of the structure of the Pentateuch as historical prologue (Gen 1:1-Exod 19:2), treaty at Sinai (Exod 19:3-Num 10:10), and historical conclusion (Num 10:11-Josh 24:33).<sup>4</sup> Within this framework Numbers completes the Sinai material begun in Exodus and begins the historical narration of Israel's approach to Canaan. The book itself may be conveniently divided along geographical lines into three parts, which we entitle "Israel Prepares to Leave Sinai" (1:1-10:10), "Israel Journeys from Sinai to Moab" (10:11-21:35), and "Victorious Israel Encamps in Plains of Moab" (22:1-36:13). The middle unit revolves geographically around the encampment at Kadesh so that its contents divide into consideration of events "From Sinai to Kadesh" (10:11-14:45) and events "From Kadesh to Moab" (15:1-21:35).

Alternatively the textual material of Numbers can be organized around its two generations, the older one which perished because of its rebellion, and the younger one which came to anticipate the exciting events of its entrance into and conquest of Canaan. In this regard D.T. Olson suggests organizing the text into two units, each beginning with a census: section I: The Death of the Old Generation; the first Exodus generation fails in the wilderness (1:1-25:19); and section II: The Birth of the New; the second Exodus generation prepares to take the land of Canaan (26:1-36:13).<sup>5</sup> Although this suggestion is intriguing, the more customary understanding that the Numbers text develops along geographical lines, as noted above, seems preferable.

On either analysis of structure, the opening words of Numbers connect the book to the Levitical legislation, which precedes it, and its closing movement prepares for the Deuteronomic presentation

---

<sup>4</sup>See David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), pp. 47-102.

<sup>5</sup>See Olson's chart, *Death of the Old*, pp. 118-120.

of Moses' proclamation of the law on the plains of Moab. Interestingly, it is Numbers that describes at length the role of the Levites, a topic practically omitted in Leviticus, which stresses instead the Levitical priesthood.

Recently, however, the anthropologist Mary Douglas has assessed the structure of Numbers. Similar in theme to her structural analysis of Leviticus,<sup>6</sup> Douglas views the book to be a unified whole. She first proposes that Numbers is structured chiasmally to mirror the early days of Israelite history in Genesis, beginning with Abraham.<sup>7</sup> She then argues that the entire book of Numbers itself is a ring (chiasm), with parallel rungs of story and law.<sup>8</sup> While Douglas's theory is certainly brilliant, and it is among the most in-depth analyses available, it seems almost too good to be true. For over 100 years critical scholars have criticized the unity and structure of the book, and, while it is the position of the authors in this commentary that Numbers is a unified composition, we freely admit that a host of structural problems persist.<sup>9</sup>

## AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

Numbers is the fourth book of Moses.<sup>10</sup> As throughout the Pentateuch after his introduction in Exodus, the great lawgiver is the major character in the book. Moses' personal involvement with the Exodus-Deuteronomy material is seen in that all the laws were given through Moses, and all the events are related to his life. The text further indicates that Moses personally recorded the wilderness itinerary (Num 33:1-2).<sup>11</sup> Throughout the remainder of the Old Testament

---

<sup>6</sup>See the section on the structure of Leviticus in this volume.

<sup>7</sup>See her chart, *In the Wilderness*, p. 101.

<sup>8</sup>See *ibid.*, pp. 102-126, especially diagram 3 on p. 118.

<sup>9</sup>For a list of chiasmic proposals throughout the book, see Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, במדבר, The New JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia and New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), pp. xxii-xxix.

<sup>10</sup>See *m. Yoma* 7:1.

<sup>11</sup>The use of the third person does not contradict Mosaic authorship as Gray suggests (George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers*, ICC [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1903], pp. xxix-xxx); but this style was customary in ancient times (see R.K. Harrison, *Numbers*, The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 1990], pp. 23-24).

the centrality of Moses is emphasized as the writers look back to the Pentateuch as “the law of Moses” (cf. 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; 2 Chr 23:18; Ezra 3:2; Neh 8:1; Dan 9:11). The New Testament continues this recognition (cf. Luke 2:22; John 1:45; Acts 13:39; Rom 10:5; 1 Cor 9:9; Heb 10:28). Further, that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch is the overwhelming voice of Jewish and Christian tradition throughout the centuries, with but little occasional and sporadic dissent. To dismiss this consistent tradition as “uncritical” is to reveal a prejudice against the past that seems unwarranted. The ancients were not stupid, and their understandings, while obviously not normative, should not be disregarded in cavalier fashion without convincing data.

Moses appears to have been preeminently qualified to write the Pentateuch. Royally educated in Egyptian schools and likely aware of the cultural background of his Mesopotamian ancestors,<sup>12</sup> including their demonstrated appreciation of law codes,<sup>13</sup> Moses would have possessed oral traditions, perhaps even written records, from the patriarchal period preceding him.<sup>14</sup> Moses had personal knowledge of Egyptian and Midianite geography and culture, and as the covenant mediator between God and Israel he had firsthand knowledge of the LORD’s requirements for his people. The years of wandering in the wilderness which Numbers documents would have offered ample time for composition. Thus Moses possessed means, motive, and opportunity for writing the Pentateuch. The art of writing was known many centuries before Moses, scribal skill was common in Moses’ time, and important documents seem to have been customarily preserved in writing.<sup>15</sup> Hence, from an a priori standpoint there seems lit-

---

<sup>12</sup>It was not unknown for foreign children to be educated under the Egyptian system, as a letter dating to the thirteenth century B.C. attests (see K.A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], p. 297).

<sup>13</sup>The biblical laws are comparable to, but are less numerous than many ancient Near Eastern law codes (e.g., the Middle Assyrian Laws, see *ANET*, pp. 180-188; Hammurabi’s Code, see *ibid.*, pp. 164-180). Literally hundreds of ancient law codes have been discovered. Thus legal codes were entirely current with Moses and the Israelites.

<sup>14</sup>See the authorship section in the introduction to Leviticus in this volume.

<sup>15</sup>Of the many affinities between the Pentateuch and ancient Law Codes, compare Leviticus 19:23-25 with Hammurabi’s Code, line 60 (*ANET*,

the cogent reason to deny the possibility of Moses' involvement in the writing and preservation of the book of the law.

As students of history we must be aware that what we do not know about the past is greater than what we do know. We do not know exactly how the Mosaic material has been preserved through the centuries for us. Questions of sources, traditions, and transmission are therefore totally appropriate, and investigation of such questions should and will continue.<sup>16</sup>

### MESSAGE

The message of Numbers involves promise and hope but, for the most part, it is hope deferred and promise delayed. While two generations of Israelites do come into focus in the book, by any reckoning the greater stress is on the first of these, the rebellious generation that witnessed the miracles of the Exodus, received the LORD's instruction at Sinai, and departed enthusiastically to go to Canaan, only to see their robust optimism melt in the desert heat and the other harsh realities of the wilderness. In this trying situation disaffection, dissatisfaction, and grumbling led to greater and greater distrust, which eventually broke out in disobedience and rebellion. The great rebellion at Kadesh is thus the negative centerpiece of the book of Numbers.

---

p. 169); Numbers 5:11-28 with Hammurabi's Code, line 132 (*ibid.*, p. 171); Exodus 21:22-25 with Middle Assyrian Laws, lines 50-53 (*ibid.*, pp. 184-185) and many others.

<sup>16</sup>Since no Hebrew documents have been discovered prior to the Gezer Calendar of the tenth century B.C., some scholars have concluded that writing was unknown to the Hebrews (and thus to Moses) before this time. However, the general paucity of extant documents (especially those written on papyrus, which was Egypt's most readily available writing material) renders such a conclusion injudicious. Additionally, Gleason Archer argues that the Gezer Calendar indicates that a broad educational system was already in place, which seems to suggest a long history of Hebrew writing (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* [Chicago: Moody, 1974]). It is also possible that Moses did not write in Hebrew at all. Such is the position of Kitchen who argues that the Pentateuch was written in a form of "alphabetic late Canaanite," and was translated into Hebrew at an early time (*Reliability*, pp. 304-306).

The story of this popular revolt against Moses and the LORD is well known. At the people's request (Deut 1:22), Moses sent out twelve spies to reconnoiter Canaan. After surveying the Promised Land, the majority of these brought back the pessimistic and faithless report that the tribes of Israel would surely be powerless against the mighty Canaanites in their strong citadels. Only Caleb and Joshua opposed this counsel, insisting that a faithful Israel, which relied on the LORD's promised aid, must certainly prevail. Interestingly, these men agreed with the majority concerning the two basic facts uncovered in their forty days' reconnaissance in the land — the country was beautiful but the inhabitants were truly formidable foes. The difference between the counsel of Caleb and Joshua and that of the ten other spies lay not in their analysis of the facts but in their faith. Joshua and Caleb trusted the LORD, whereas the other men did not trust God, hence were cowed and intimidated. The people however followed the unbelieving assessment of the majority, gave way to mass hysteria, and rebelled outright against the LORD and his appointed leaders Moses and Aaron.

In this crisis the LORD threatened to annihilate the panicked people who were standing in revolt against the holy covenant and their divine sovereign. As in the golden calf episode earlier (Exod 32:1–34:35), Moses interceded effectively, the people repented, and the LORD relented. The people's sin of infidelity and disobedience, however, brought dire consequences. Prohibited from entering the beautiful land, they were consigned to live out their lives in the dreary arid wilderness around Kadesh. In an ironic touch the LORD made their prayer their punishment. In their fear they wished for death in the wilderness as preferable to entrance into Canaan (14:2-3). In retribution for their rebellion the LORD answered their prayer by granting their wish.

To all the negativism of this sordid episode and its aftermath, three positive motifs stand in clear contrast in the text of Numbers. These are the character of Moses, the covenant faithfulness of the LORD, and the renewal of promise for the generation emerging from the wilderness experience.

The true greatness of Moses as a human leader is seen in the text of Numbers more clearly than in any other biblical narrative. A genuinely faithful "servant in all God's house" (Heb 3:5), Moses combined deep humility with unswerving loyalty to his covenant task as

mediator between the holy LORD and his sinful, recalcitrant people. The fickle faithlessness of the people contrasted with the LORD's responses, underlines God's fidelity to his covenant purpose to bless Israel and ultimately all mankind. This theme, echoed strongly throughout Scripture, is emphasized by the details of the wilderness experience. Truly, the LORD revealed himself repeatedly as compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love and faithfulness (cf. Exod 34:6-7). Convinced of these precious realities the new generation prepared to recommit itself to the LORD so as to stand ready to inherit his promises.

### **SPECIAL PROBLEM: LARGE NUMBERS IN THE CENSUSES**

A problem that has received a great deal of attention in the book is the seemingly inflated numbers in the military censuses of chapters 1 and 26. While many interpreters insist that the numbers are original and authentic, numerous other suggestions have been offered, from textual corruption to the proposal that the censuses themselves are interpolations, and thus unhistorical.<sup>17</sup>

Most critical scholars are of the opinion that the census figures are the product of later priestly editors who wished to inflate the population totals to reflect a more prominent past for their people. However, virtually no evidence can be adduced in favor of such a proposition, and the language and structure of the censuses attest to their antiquity.<sup>18</sup> Military censuses were the order of the day in Israel's monarchial period (cf. 2 Sam 24; 2 Chr 14, 17, etc.), as well as in other cultures at the time (at Mari, Alalakh, and Ras Shamra).<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>Many still consider the study of J.W. Colenso in 1862 to invalidate definitively the census figures (*The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined* [London: Longman, 1862], pp. 31ff.). Norman Gottwald, in his famous work, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, after estimating that 600,000 males of military age would yield a total population upwards of 2,500,000, remarked that the figure would have been "ridiculously excessive" (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979, p. 51).

<sup>18</sup>See Milgrom, *Numbers*, pp. 335-339, for a discussion of ancient censuses and Near Eastern analogies to those of Numbers.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 336.

Thus they are known at a very early date, and there is no reason to doubt that the military censuses are an original and early catalogue of Israel's population.

Nevertheless, a problem persists in the exact figures of the censuses. The principle difficulty is based on the Hebrew term **אֶלֶף** (*eleph*), which is traditionally translated "thousand," but could possibly instead be rendered "clan."<sup>20</sup> Such is the preferred rendering in Judges 6:15 and 1 Samuel 10:19, and it can be argued that Numbers 10:4 and 31:5 are best understood in this way. If this translation is adopted in the censuses, the figures are significantly reduced. Based upon this presupposition, Mendenhall's study yields a total of just over 20,000 in the Exodus;<sup>21</sup> that of Clark suggests about 140,000;<sup>22</sup> and that of Wenham approximately 75,000.<sup>23</sup> Compare this data with Gottwald's literal reckoning (reading *eleph* as "1000") of 2.5 million (see note 17 above).

Conservative scholars have generally accepted the numbers as authentic, and have argued that large census figures simply harmonize the population accounts of Exodus 1. Gleason Archer, for example, argues that the numbers must be authentic in order to understand Exodus 1:9.<sup>24</sup> However, he seems to overlook the fact that the Pharaoh is not afraid of the Israelites alone, but of their potential alliance with other peoples (Exod 1:10). In addition, it is unlikely that the Pharaoh felt that the Israelites were a threat to the entire Egyptian empire, but to only the Delta region in which they labored. This potentiality would not require such a large force. Still, however, the fact that both *eleph* and **מֵאוֹת**, (*mē'ôth*, "hundreds") are juxtaposed in the censuses (Num 1:21,23,25,27, etc.) most naturally suggests that they are both to be read as numerals, exposing the primary weakness of reading the former as "clan."

<sup>20</sup>The term may also be translated "leader," as a falling wall would unlikely kill 27,000, but 27 leaders or officials is more likely (1 Kgs 20:30).

<sup>21</sup>George E. Mendenhall, "The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26," *JBL* 77 (1958): 52-66.

<sup>22</sup>R.E.D. Clark, "The Large Numbers in the Old Testament," *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 87 (1955): 82-92.

<sup>23</sup>J.W. Wenham, "Large Numbers in the Old Testament," *TynBul* 18 (1967): 19-53.

<sup>24</sup>Archer, *Survey*, p. 247.

Scholarship has yet to find a flawless conclusion to the conundrum of large numbers. On the one hand, the text most naturally reads “thousand” rather than tribe; on the other hand, it seems nearly impossible for 2.5 million people to have traversed the wilderness, assembling at the tabernacle on holy convocations (cf. Leviticus 23) and other appointed meetings. It is also questionable whether a fighting force of 603,550 (Num 1:46) would cause the spies to shy away from battle (13:26ff.). However, we may leave the question open. Neither suggestion affects the date of the material nor its reliability, and each is ultimately based upon how one views the evidence.

### NUMBERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Concerning the continuing relevance of the ancient Israelite history revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, Paul declared in Romans 15:4, “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” More specifically the same apostle traced at length Number’s record of the wilderness generation’s rebellion and ruin in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11. The essential lesson is that privilege involves responsibility for us as it did for them. God calls to faithfulness and demands his people’s loyal allegiance. We should learn from the failure of the unbelieving older generation in Numbers and from the success of the trusting younger generation. As God punishes those who disobey his laws and trifle with his covenant, so he also empowers those who do his will and trust his promises.

The writer of Hebrews likewise documents the permanent value of the wilderness record given in Numbers by utilizing this record and the inspired commentary on it in Psalm 95:7-11 in a lengthy admonition to his hearers (Heb 3:1-4:13). Warning of “sin’s deceitfulness” he reminds, “We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly to the end the confidence we had at first” (3:14). Echoing again Psalm 95:7-8, he adds,

As has just been said: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.” Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it

not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. (3:15-19)

Psalm 95:11, moreover, pictures the divine oath concerning the rebellious generation, "They shall never enter my rest." The Hebrew writer expounds upon this promised rest (compare Deut 12:9) and the warning implicit in those who missed it, saying, "Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith" (Heb 4:1-2). Continuing his emphasis upon the rest promised to the people of God, the writer of Hebrews adds, "It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience" (4:6). He then concludes with the exhortation, "Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience" (4:11). Finally, the Hebrews writer underlines the seriousness of his inspired warning by stressing the character and power of the word of God and the openness of our hearts before him (4:12-13).

Comparing our Christian living to the experience of the wilderness generations, we need to remember that, as they came out of physical bondage in Egypt, so we have come out of spiritual slavery to sin, as they were journeying toward an inheritance and rest in Canaan, so we are traveling toward a heavenly inheritance and rest for our souls. This new exodus motif for the Christian life reminds us that it is the wilderness that is parallel to our living in this age between our redemption and our resurrection. For this reason we must follow closely our greater "prophet like unto Moses," Jesus Christ, trust him to guide us on the journey, and look confidently to our eternal destiny. In this lifelong enterprise we must not let the frustrations and testing of our "wilderness" lead us into tragic rebellion.

The positive side of this New Testament warning taken from the Numbers record of the wilderness generations is the constancy of Christ. We focus on Jesus, "the apostle and high priest whom we

confess” (Heb 3:1). “Christ is faithful as a Son over God’s house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast” (Heb 3:6). Thus, “since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess” (Heb 4:14).

# OUTLINE OF NUMBERS

## **PART ONE: ISRAEL PREPARES TO LEAVE SINAI – 1:1-10:10**

- I. ISRAEL NUMBERED – 1:1-54**
  - A. Census Takers Appointed – 1:1-16**
  - B. The Census Taken – 1:17-46**
  - C. Levites Exempted – 1:47-54**
- II. POSITIONS ASSIGNED FOR ENCAMPMENT AND MARCH – 2:1-34**
- III. LEVITES NUMBERED, APPOINTED FOR SERVICE – 3:1-4:49**
  - A. Levites Set Apart for Sanctuary Service – 3:1-13**
  - B. Levites Numbered and Their Duties Given – 3:14-39**
  - C. Levites Exchanged for Israel's Firstborn – 3:40-51**
  - D. Levites Numbered for Actual Service – 4:1-49**
- IV. MISCELLANEOUS LAWS ISSUED – 5:1-6:27**
  - A. Unclean Excluded from Camp – 5:1-4**
  - B. Law of Restitution Treated – 5:5-10**
  - C. Divine Judgment to Be Sought for Suspected Adulteress – 5:11-31**
  - D. Nazirite Vow Regulated – 6:1-21**
    - 1. Nazirite Law Stated – 6:1-8
    - 2. Accidental Violation Treated – 6:9-12
    - 3. Termination Ceremony Depicted – 6:13-21
  - E. Priestly Benediction Revealed – 6:22-27**
- V. SPECIAL OFFERINGS MADE BY TRIBAL LEADERS – 7:1-89**
  - A. Wagons and Oxen Provided – 7:1-11**
  - B. Dedicatory Offerings Brought – 7:12-88**
  - C. Divine Voice Speaks from Mercy Seat – 7:89**
- VI. TABERNACLE INAUGURATION COMPLETED – 8:1-10:10**

- A. Sacred Lamps Affixed by Aaron** – 8:1-4
- B. Levites Inducted** – 8:5-26
  - 1. Instructions for Cleansing Given – 8:5-14
  - 2. Cleansed Levites Begin Service – 8:15-22
  - 3. Age of Active Levite Service Stipulated – 8:23-26
- C. Passover Observed, Supplementary Passover Provided** – 9:1-14
- D. Provisions for Guidance Depicted** – 9:15–10:10
  - 1. Israel Directed by the Cloud – 9:15-23
  - 2. Silver Trumpets Made – 10:1-10

## **PART TWO: ISRAEL JOURNEYS FROM SINAI TO MOAB – 10:11–21:35**

- I. FROM SINAI TO KADESH** – 10:11–14:45
  - A. Israel Departs Sinai** – 10:11-36
    - 1. Order of March Reviewed – 10:11-28
    - 2. Moses Asks Hobab to Accompany Israel – 10:29-32
    - 3. The Departure Noted – 10:33-36
  - B. Israel Complains of Difficulties** – 11:1-35
    - 1. Fire Brought at Taberah – 11:1-3
    - 2. People Cry for Meat – 11:4-9
    - 3. Near Exhaustion, Moses Entreats God – 11:10-15
    - 4. God Answers Moses' Plea – 11:16-23
    - 5. Elders Appointed as Aides for Moses – 11:24-30
    - 6. Blessing of Quail Made a Curse by Lusting People – 11:31-35
  - C. Moses' Uniqueness Challenged** – 12:1-16
    - 1. God Rebukes Effrontery of Miriam and Aaron – 12:1-8
    - 2. Moses Intercedes for Stricken Sister – 12:9-16
  - D. The Great Rebellion at Kadesh Punished** – 13:1–14:45
    - 1. Leaders Chosen for Reconnaissance in Canaan – 13:1-16
    - 2. Moses Commissions Intelligence Team – 13:17-20
    - 3. Spies Reconnoiter Canaan – 13:21-25
    - 4. Pessimistic Report Returned – 13:26-29
    - 5. Caleb's Faithful Counsel Repudiated – 13:30-33
    - 6. Hysterical Congregation Threatens Revolt – 14:1-4
    - 7. Joshua, Caleb Plead with the People – 14:5-9
    - 8. God Threatens to Annihilate Israel – 14:10-12
    - 9. Moses Again Intercedes for His People – 14:13-19

10. God Pardons, but Reveals Consequences – 14:20-25
11. Divine Decree Announced to Israel – 14:26-35
12. Faithless Spies Die by Plague – 14:36-38
13. Abortive Southern Invasion Repelled – 14:39-45

## **II. FROM KADESH TO MOAB – 15:1-21:35**

### **A. Additional Laws Given – 15:1-41**

1. Amounts Given for Sacrificial Accompaniments – 15:1-16
2. Ground Meal Offering Stipulated – 15:17-21
3. Sin Offerings Considered Again – 15:22-31
4. A Sabbath Breaker Stoned – 15:32-36
5. Commemorative Tassels Ordained – 15:37-41

### **B. Rebellion of Korah Punished – 16:1-17:13**

1. Korah Revolts, Moses Responds – 16:1-11
2. Dathan, Abiram Refuse Summons – 16:12-14
3. Censer-Bearing Company Appears before Tent – 16:15-21
4. Moses, Aaron Intercede for Threatened People – 16:22-24
5. Moses Predicts the Rebels' Fate – 16:25-30
6. Predicted Earthquake and Fire Destroys Rebels – 16:31-35
7. Censers of Rebels Consecrated as Memorial – 16:36-40
8. Plague on Recalcitrant People Halted through Aaron's Intercession – 16:41-50
9. Demonstration of Priestly Authority Planned – 17:1-11
10. People Frightened by Events – 17:12-13

### **C. Duties, Dues of Priests and Levites Regulated – 18:1-32**

1. Sanctuary Duties of Priests and Levites Reemphasized – 18:1-7
2. Priestly Revenues Listed – 18:8-20
3. Levites to Be Supported by Tithe – 18:21-24
4. Levite Offering from Tithe Stipulated – 18:25-32

### **D. Water of Purification Ordained – 19:1-22**

1. Preparation of Purificatory Ash Described – 19:1-10
2. General Law of Cleansing Stated – 19:11-13
3. Specific Applications Made – 19:14-22

### **E. Final Events at Kadesh Related – 20:1-21**

1. Miriam Dies – 20:1
2. Water Crisis Experienced Anew – 20:2-13
3. Passage through Edom Denied – 20:14-21

### **F. Israel Journeys to Moab – 20:22-21:35**

1. Aaron Dies – 20:22-29
2. King of Arad Defeated – 21:1-3
3. Murmuring People Punished, Saved through Bronze Serpent – 21:4-9
4. Several Encampments Listed – 21:10-20
5. King Sihon Defeated; Amorite Territory Occupied – 21:21-30
6. Israel Defeats Og, Takes Bashan – 21:31-35

### **PART THREE: VICTORIOUS ISRAEL ENCAMPS IN PLAINS OF MOAB – 22:1-36:13**

#### **I. BALAK, BALAAM CONSPIRE AGAINST ISRAEL – 22:1-25:18**

##### **A. Balaam Summoned to Moab – 22:1-41**

1. Balak Calls Balaam to Curse Israel – 22:1-6
2. Balaam Declines First Summons – 22:7-14
3. Presumptuous Balaam Permitted Journey – 22:15-20
4. Balaam Delivered, Counseled by Donkey – 22:21-30
5. God Speaks to Balaam – 22:31-35
6. Balaam Arrives in Moab for Attempted Cursing – 22:36-41

##### **B. Balaam Delivers Divine Oracles – 23:1-24:25**

1. Balaam Blesses Israel, Frustrates Balak's Intent – 23:1-12
2. Balak Foiled Again As Balaam Voices Second Blessing – 23:13-26
3. Balaam Proclaims Third Blessing before Frustrated Moabites – 23:27-24:9
4. Balaam's Concluding Messages Recorded – 24:10-25

##### **C. Israel Enticed to Idolatrous Lewdness – 25:1-18**

1. Israelites Engaged in Heathen Rites by Moabite Women – 25:1-5
2. Phinehas Takes Decisive Action in Midianite Seduction – 25:6-9
3. Phinehas Rewarded by Confirmation of Priesthood – 25:10-13
4. Slain Couple Identified – 25:14-15
5. Midianites Slated for Punishment – 25:16-18

#### **II. ISRAEL PREPARES TO ENTER CANAAN – 26:1-36:13**

##### **A. Second Census Taken – 26:1-65**

1. The Census Commanded – 26:1-4
2. Israel Numbered Again – 26:5-51
3. Land Division Planned – 26:52-56
4. Levites Counted – 26:57-62
5. Wilderness Judgment Recalled – 26:63-65
- B. Zelophehad's Daughters Granted Inheritance Rights – 27:1-11**
  1. Daughters Make Appeal for Father's Inheritance – 27:1-4
  2. Favorable Ruling Establishes Precedent; Order of Inheritance Stipulated – 27:5-11
- C. Joshua Commissioned to Be Moses' Successor – 27:12-23**
  1. Moses Told of Approaching Death – 27:12-14
  2. Joshua Appointed in Response to Moses' Request – 27:15-23
- D. Schedule for Public Offerings Given – 28:1-29:40**
  1. Daily Offering Stated – 28:1-8
  2. Sabbath Offering Stated – 28:9-10
  3. New Moon Offering Depicted – 28:11-15
  4. Offering for Days of Unleavened Bread Depicted – 28:16-25
  5. Pentecost Offering Depicted – 28:26-31
  6. Offering for Feast of Trumpets – 29:1-6
  7. Offering for Day of Atonement Listed – 29:7-11
  8. Offering for Tabernacles Enumerated – 29:12-38
  9. The Matter Concluded – 29:39-40
- E. Vows of Women Regulated – 30:1-16**
- F. Israel Avenged upon Midian – 31:1-54**
  1. Midianites Devastated in Holy War – 31:1-12
  2. Captives Executed; Purification Rites Required – 31:13-20
  3. Additional Purification Regulation Given – 31:21-24
  4. Spoils of War Apportioned – 31:25-47
  5. Special Offering Made by Officers – 31:48-54
- G. Reuben, Gad, Part of Manasseh Permitted Transjordan Settlement – 32:1-42**
  1. Reuben, Gad Petition for Eastern Inheritance – 32:1-5
  2. Moses Rebukes Tribal Selfishness – 32:6-15
  3. Revised Proposal with Invasion Role Approved – 32:16-27
  4. Inheritance Compact Formally Concluded – 32:28-32
  5. Provisional Defensive Settlement Described – 32:33-42

**H. Wilderness Route Reviewed – 33:1-49**

1. Exodus from Egypt Recalled – 33:1-4
2. Route Traced from Egypt to Sinai –33:5-15
3. March to Kadesh and Wanderings Listed – 33:16-36
4. Journey to Plains of Moab Recalled –33:37-49

**I. Instructions Given for Conquest, Inheritance – 33:50-36:13**

1. Canaanites to Be Expelled, Their Gods Destroyed,  
Their Land Possessed – 33:50-56
2. Intended Boundaries Described – 34:1-15
3. Leaders Chosen for Land Division – 34:16-29
4. Cities Ordained for Levites – 35:1-5
5. Cities Slated for Refuge – 35:6-34
6. Heiresses' Marriage Restricted – 36:1-13