

Old Testament Survey

Numbers

Numbers

- The title Numbers is derived from the Septuagint (*Arithmoi* – Greek).
- It is also known as “In the desert” (*bemidbar* – Hebrew) in Jewish circles.
- Continues the story from Leviticus

“Past promises will prevail in spite of present problems”

Numbers

- **Numbers 1-25** – Story of the first generation that left Egypt
- **Numbers 26-36** – Story of new beginnings with the second generation

Numbers – Overview

- **The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)**
 - **The Preparation and Inauguration of the March of Israel (1:1-10:36)**
 - The first census and orders for encampment around the tabernacle (1:1-4:49)
 - A census of Israel's fighting men, 20+ years (603,550)
 - God gives the order for encampment & marching out
 - A census of the Levites, 1+ months (22,000)
 - A census of the Levites able to serve, 30-50 years (8,580)

Numbers – Overview

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 - **The Preparation and Inauguration of the March of Israel (1:1-10:36)**
 - The first census and orders for encampment around the tabernacle (1:1-4:49)
 - The Kohathite, Gershonite, and Merarite clans receive their tasks
 - The Kohathites had the most dangerous task, a mistake could mean death (see Uzzah – 2 Sam. 6:1-7)

Numbers – Overview

- **The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)**
 - **The Preparation and Inauguration of the March of Israel (1:1-10:36)**
 - The test for purity and the Nazirite vow (5:1-6:27)
 - Purity of the camp
 - Restitution of wrongs
 - Testing for marital unfaithfulness
 - The nazirite vow

Numbers – Overview

- **The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)**
 - **The Preparation and Inauguration of the March of Israel (1:1-10:36)**
 - Dedication of the tabernacle and observance of the Passover (7:1-9:23)
 - The heads of the families that were involved in the census each brought an offering
 - The purification and setting apart of the Levites
 - Observance of the Passover
 - The cloud over the tabernacle

Numbers – Overview

- **The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)**
 - **The Preparation and Inauguration of the March of Israel (1:1-10:36)**
 - The Israelites begin their journey (10:1-36)
 - The silver trumpets – used for summoning, setting out, battle, rejoicing/festivals
 - The beginning of the journey

Numbers – Overview

- **The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)**
 - **The Cycle of Rebellion, Death, and Deliverance of Israel with Elements of Hope (11:1-25:18)**
 - Complaints of the people and God's judgment (11:1-14:45)
 - Complaints of hardships – God responds with fire
 - Complaints of food – God responds with abundant quail...and a plague
 - Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses – God strikes Miriam with leprosy

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 - **The Cycle of Rebellion, Death, and Deliverance of Israel with Elements of Hope (11:1-25:18)**
 - Complaints of the people and God's judgment (11:1-14:45)
 - Spies in the Promised Land – 10 of the spies bring back a bad report and the people accept it and grumble against Moses & Aaron, refusal to enter the Promised Land
 - Joshua & Caleb stood up to the people to appeal to them
 - God strikes down the 10 spies and condemns the rest of the nation to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

Numbers – Overview

- **The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)**
 - **The Cycle of Rebellion, Death, and Deliverance of Israel with Elements of Hope (11:1-25:18)**
 - A collection of laws (15:1-41)
 - Supplementary offerings
 - Offerings for unintentional sins
 - Laws regarding the Sabbath
 - Tassels on garments

Numbers – Overview

- **The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)**
 - **The Cycle of Rebellion, Death, and Deliverance of Israel with Elements of Hope (11:1-25:18)**
 - Korah's Rebellion (16:1-50)
 - Korah, Dathan, and Abiram along with 250 men confront Moses
 - Moses challenged them to offer incense before the Lord
 - The earth swallows up Korah and his followers and fire from the Lord burns up the 250 with them
 - The next day the people oppose Moses & Aaron – God responds with a plague

Numbers – Overview

- **The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)**
 - **The Cycle of Rebellion, Death, and Deliverance of Israel with Elements of Hope (11:1-25:18)**
 - The Budding of Aaron's staff (17:1-13)
 - God vindicates Aaron by causing his staff to blossom among the staffs of the other tribal leaders of Israel

Numbers – Overview

- The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)
 - The Cycle of Rebellion, Death, and Deliverance of Israel with Elements of Hope (11:1-25:18)
 - Additional commands concerning the priests (18:1-19:22)
 - Duties of priests and Levites
 - Offerings for priests and Levites
 - Water of cleansing

Numbers – Overview

- **The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)**
 - **The Cycle of Rebellion, Death, and Deliverance of Israel with Elements of Hope (11:1-25:18)**
 - Journey to the plains of Moab, further disobedience (20:1-21:35)
 - The community gathered to oppose Moses and Aaron when there was no water
 - God told Moses to take his staff and to speak to the rock to make it yield water but Moses struck the rock with the staff instead
 - Moses and Aaron are denied entry into the Promised Land

Numbers – Overview

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 - **The Cycle of Rebellion, Death, and Deliverance of Israel with Elements of Hope (11:1-25:18)**
 - Journey to the plains of Moab, further disobedience (20:1-21:35)
 - Resistance of Edom
 - The death of Aaron
 - Destruction of Arad
 - People begin to speak against God and Moses again – God responds with venomous snakes
 - When the people repented, Moses prayed and was instructed by God to create a snake and to put it on a pole to save the people

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 - Journey to the plains of Moab, further disobedience (20:1-21:35)
 - The journey to Moab, a record of the travels of Israel
 - The defeat of Sihon and Og
 - Israel asked for passage through the territory but Sihon attacked them instead
 - Israel defeats Sihon and takes over his land
 - Og marches out against Israel but is also defeated and Israel takes his land as well

Numbers – Overview

- The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)
 - The Cycle of Rebellion, Death, and Deliverance of Israel with Elements of Hope (11:1-25:18)
 - Balaam's oracles (22:1-24:25)
 - Balak king of Moab sends for Balaam twice to curse Israel
 - Balaam's donkey
 - Balaam's first oracle – The people of Israel are set apart, they are righteous and numerous
 - Balaam's second oracle – Israel is blessed and protected, God is with them, they are strong and victorious. The blessings are based on God's faithfulness and unchanging character.

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- **The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)**
 - **The Cycle of Rebellion, Death, and Deliverance of Israel with Elements of Hope (11:1-25:18)**
 - Balaam’s oracles (22:1-24:25)
 - Balaam’s third oracle – Israel is prosperous, they are strong and victorious. “May those who bless you be blessed and those who curse you be cursed” (see Genesis 12:3).
 - Balaam’s fourth oracle – Israel will have a king from the tribe of Judah. Israel will grow strong and will defeat the other nations.
 - Balaam’s fifth through seventh oracles – Defeat of the Amalekites, defeat of the Kenites, defeat of Asshur

Numbers – Overview

- **The First Generation in the Wilderness (1:1-25:18)**
 - **The Cycle of Rebellion, Death, and Deliverance of Israel with Elements of Hope (11:1-25:18)**
 - Israel's apostasy and the end of the first generation (25:1-18)
 - Moab begins to seduce the men of Israel to indulge in sexual immorality and idol worship
 - An Israelite leader brings a Midianite woman into the camp in front of everyone, when Phinehas sees this he takes a spear and kills them both
 - Plague had broken out in the camp but Phinehas stopped it

Numbers – Overview

- The Second Generation Prepares to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)
 - The Preparation of Israel as They Ready Themselves to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)
 - The second census (26:1-65)
 - A census of Israel's fighting men, 20+ years (601,730)
 - A census of the Levites, 1+ months (23,000)

Numbers – Overview

- The Second Generation Prepares to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)
 - The Preparation of Israel as They Ready Themselves to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)
 - Inheritance for women (27:1-11)
 - Daughters of Zelophehad
 - Inheritance rights for people without sons
 - God instituted an inheritance order: Son => Daughter => Brothers => Uncles => Closest clan relative

Numbers – Overview

- The Second Generation Prepares to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)
 - The Preparation of Israel as They Ready Themselves to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)
 - The successor to Moses (27:12-23)
 - God calls Moses to show him the Promised Land
 - God tells Moses to commission Joshua as his successor

Numbers – Overview

- The Second Generation Prepares to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)
 - The Preparation of Israel as They Ready Themselves to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)
 - The war against Midian (31:1-53)
 - God sends Israel to war against the Midianites and gives them total victory
 - The Israelites failed to totally destroy all of the Midianites, Moses admonishes them to finish the job
 - Records of the division of the spoils

Numbers – Overview

- The Second Generation Prepares to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)
 - The Preparation of Israel as They Ready Themselves to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)
 - Settlement of the Transjordan tribes (32:1-42)
 - The Reubenites and Gadites ask Moses for the land on the east side of the Jordan
 - Moses allowed this provided that they fought with the rest of Israel to take the Promised Land
 - The Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh built cities and livestock pens in the land captured from Sihon and Og

Numbers – Overview

- **The Second Generation Prepares to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)**
 - **The Preparation of Israel as They Ready Themselves to Enter the Promised Land (26:1-36:13)**
 - Appendix: travel logs and instructions for land inheritance and transfer (33:1-36:13)
 - The stages of the journey
 - The Land of inheritance
 - Cities of refuge
 - Security of the tribal inheritances

Numbers – Themes

- **Fulfillment of God's Promises**
 - **The promise of People**
 - It was God who commanded the censuses and now we have a record and can see how God was working to grow His people (Exodus 1:7-20).
 - Back in Genesis 46:26-27, 70 people entered Egypt. In the span of 400 years God grew that to over 600,000 and preserved that number even in the act of judging an entire generation. The number of the second census is very close to that of the first despite all of the people (God grew them and maintained their numbers).

Numbers – Themes

- **Fulfillment of God's Promises**
 - **The promise of Place**
 - God offered it to the first generation but the people refused. God stayed faithful to the next generation and brought them back to the edge of the Promised Land with a new opportunity to obey Him.
 - Even in the face of defeat and judgment, God provided hope to the first generation in the commands that He gave that entry into the land would be certainty, albeit a distant one.
 - God also gave victory to the Israelites against rulers on the east side of the Jordan along with the land of the defeated people as part of the spoils.

Numbers – Themes

- **Fulfillment of God's Promises**
 - **The promise of God's Presence**
 - God dwelt among His people and revealed to them his special presence. The tabernacle was always at the center of the Israelite encampment. He led the people in their travels (9:17-23) and acted personally to bless as well as to punish them.
 - God Himself declared that he dwelt among the Israelites (5:3; 35:34).

Numbers – Themes

- **Fulfillment of God's Promises**
 - **The promise of Blessing to the Nations**
 - Hobab the Midianite Moses' brother-in-law, was invited to join the Israelites on their journey with the promise of kind treatment by them (10:29-32)
 - Provision for aliens in the commands of God: 9:14; 15:14-16, 26, 29-31; 19:10; 35:15

Numbers – Themes

- **Grumbling/Disobedience/Rebellion of Israel**
 - Israel's dissatisfaction and lack of gratitude for God's generosity
 - Rejected the authority of Moses
 - Turning their hearts back to Egypt
 - Unbelief in the power of God to bring them into the Promised Land
 - Apostasy

Numbers – Themes

- **God's Holiness**
 - God repeatedly warns the Israelites to approach Him only in the ways He prescribed
 - Failure to rightly revere God resulted in death
 - This applied not only to the visible presence of God but also to the articles associated with the presence and worship of God (i.e., the tabernacle and its furnishings and instruments)

Shadows of Christ

- **Shadows of Christ**
 - The bronze snake
 - The one who is the star of Jacob and scepter of Israel
 - The work of the priest in atonement
 - The death of the high priest

Next class

- Deuteronomy

References

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