

NUMBERS and JUDE

NUMBERS

Are you still with us God?

We need food!

We are scared and crabby!!

Whether you like exciting stories, inspiration, and statistics, or any other kind of writing, you will find something in Numbers to suit you. Numbers covers the 40 years of wilderness wandering which the Israelites experienced. The story picks up after they leave Mount Sinai. At the end of the book, they are preparing to cross the Jordan River and move into the land to which God has been leading them.

As you read Numbers, keep three questions in mind:

1. What can I learn from the Israelites, which will help me when I want to complain and rebel?
2. What can I learn about gratitude and repentance?
3. What can I learn to help me believe God's promises so that I risk greatness for God instead of settling for mediocrity?

The outline is provided to help you get a quick overview. Many people are familiar with some of the characters or stories in Numbers, even if they have never read the book. You may know more than you think. For example, the bronze serpent of Numbers 21 is referred to in John 3. The outline will also help you jump over (or out of) any sections which seem dry or confusing.

The book gets its name from the counting of the numbers of people in the twelve tribes of Israel. I now find this kind of statistical information very intriguing, but it was a total turn off when I was less familiar with the Old Testament. So please, jump out and over the portions which hold you back from the rest of the book. The most exciting stories are in chapters 13, 14, 16, 21, 23, 25, and 27.

Preparations for the Journey – Numbers 1-9

- Census of the 12 Tribes 1:1-54
- Layout of the wilderness camp 2:1-34
- Census of the Levites 3:3-4:49
- Laws, offerings, dedication of priests 5:1-8:-26
- Passover instructions 9:1-14
- Cloud of God's presence and pillar of fire/cloud lead the way 9:15-23

Departure and Doubt – Numbers 10-14

- Marching Orders 10:1-36

- Complaints: We want meat!! 11:1-30
- Aaron and Miriam jealous of Moses 12:1-16
- Spies check out Canaan 13:1-33
- People afraid to enter, refuse to trust God, so they must wander 40 years until a new generation replaces doubters 14:1-14

Wandering: Rebellion and Healing – Numbers 15-21

- Offerings, Sabbath rest, etc. 15:1-41
- Rebellion of Korah; earthquake and fire 16:1-50
- More complaints; a blossoming staff 17:1-12
- Responsibilities of priests and Levites 18:1-32
- Ceremony of the Red Heifer 19:1-22
- Waters of Meribah (quarrelling with God) 20:1-21
- Death of Aaron 20:22-29
- The Bronze Serpent 21:1-9

Into the Promised Land – Numbers 21-36

- Defeat of King Sihon and King Og 21:10-35
- Balaam, the talking donkey and blessing 22:1-24:25
- Temptation, Idolatry and Death 25:1-17
- Census of a New Generation 26:1-65
- Joshua appointed Moses' successor 27:1-23
- Instructions: worship, atonement, vows 28:1-30:16
- War and conquest east of Jordan River 31:1-32:42
- Review the journey; final plans for Canaan 34:1-36:13

JUDE

Jude warns Christians to protect themselves from false teachers who will lead them into distrust and disobedience. In this one chapter, he quickly refers to several Old Testament stories. These include two from Numbers named in Jude verse 11. Balaam was recruited to speak against Israel but is stopped by God. See Numbers 22 and 23 to read about his talking donkey and how God gets him to speak truth and blessing. Korah led a rebellion among the Israelites. See Numbers 16 to learn how God stopped the rebellion with earthquake and fire. Jude also quotes from later Jewish writings, *The Assumption of Moses* (Jude verse 8-9) and *The Book of Enoch* (Jude verse 14-15). They are from a collection of writings called the Pseudepigrapha, written between 250 B.C. and 200 A.D. Jude identifies himself as brother of James. We can only guess if this is the disciple James or another James known to early readers of this letter, but not to us.