



## Getting started with Numbers

!! WARNING !!

That's what the book of Numbers is. Here's Paul: "These things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil as they did." (1 Cor 10v6)

While there are some positive examples of faith for us to learn from, the book of Numbers is largely a lesson in what NOT to do!

Numbers continues on from Leviticus...



It's the story of the people of God on a journey – after the great rescue of Exodus, but before they set foot in the Promised Land.

We, too, are on a journey between rescue and the Promised Land; so Numbers gives us lessons for the wilderness journey.

As the book develops, we see a contrast between the repeated rebellion of the people and the repeated grace and faithfulness of God.

The lesson to learn? Hebrews 3v12,15: "See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God... as has just been said: 'Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.'"

Numbers encourages us to keep trusting God in the wilderness, to enter the inheritance Christ has secured for us. God will deliver, just as He has promised.

## **Structure**

Two times a census is taken. Chapter 1 & Chapter 26. This represents two generations – one died in the wilderness; one went on to live in the promised land.

This distinction tells us the kind of thing to look out for in the chapters following each census.

## **Jesus in Numbers**

- Whenever we read about the role of Priests or Leaders, it points us forward to the Great High Priest, and the King of Kings.
- In chapter 22, Moab's king hires Balaam to rain down curses on God's people. No matter how hard he tries, he can only end up blessing them! By chapter 24 he even has a prophecy about a star coming out of Jacob, a ruler who will crush the enemy... setting the scene for Jesus...
- John 3v14-16 picks up on the snake incident in chapter 21. Anyone who looks to Him shall live.

## **How to read lists**

There are loads of lists in Numbers! But there is always a reason. Here are some tools to use...

- Some stuff is repeated – ask “Why?” For example, the fact that each tribe is mentioned by name shows us that the WHOLE people of God will make their way to the Promised Land, just as He had promised.
- Some stuff is different – occasionally there is a break from a repeated pattern, a verse that stands out. Take notice – often this verse has an important lesson.
- Put yourself in their shoes – what was the significance for the first readers, just a generation or two later? How would these lists make them feel?
- Cling to a verse – if you find yourself baffled by your reading that day, try to at least find one verse which teaches you something about God and use that to fuel your prayer and praise.



## RBT Grow Group is on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October

Bring along some things from your reading of  
Numbers to share with others.

### **Some RBT reading ideas:**

- Meet up once a week to read it with a friend.
- Listen online at [Biblegateway.com](http://Biblegateway.com)
- Write down a verse that struck you that day.
- Encourage someone by texting them a thought from what you've read.

### **Grow 1:1 questions to unlock the passage:**

**What** does this teach me about God?

**How** does this point me to the Lord Jesus and His cross?

**What** does this teach me about myself?

**How** does this help me to pray?

**What** difference will this make to my week?



Here are some questions the Bible wants you to ask of itself. Use these to help you as you read your way through this month's book: (please don't feel like you have to fill in every question in loads of detail. These are a guide to help you learn from what you are reading.)

- What did you learn about Jesus and what it means to trust him? (Luke 24:45-47)
- What did you learn about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)
- How were you corrected or rebuked or equipped for every good work? (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- What did you learn from the book that will help you keep going as a follower of Jesus? (Romans 15:4)
- What did you learn that will help you serve and build up the church? (Eph 4:11-16)
- What have you learnt that helps you love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind? (Matt 22:37-40)
- What has helped you love your neighbour as yourself? (Matt 22:37-40)