

## Focused Survey of Numbers

This class is a survey of the book of Numbers. The focus of the study is to relate to the New Testament references made to this record.

CLASS	DATE	CHAPTERS	SUBJECT
<u><a href="#">1</a></u>	January 12	<u><a href="#">Numbers 1-6</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Counting Israel</a></u> / <u><a href="#">Law of Jealousy</a></u> <u><a href="#">The Nazarite Vow</a></u> / <u><a href="#">The Levitical Blessing</a></u>
<u><a href="#">2</a></u>	January 20	<u><a href="#">Numbers 7-10</a></u>	<u><a href="#">The Offering of the Tribes</a></u> / <u><a href="#">The Levites are Consecrated</a></u> <u><a href="#">The Passover</a></u> / <u><a href="#">Moving the Ark</a></u>
<u><a href="#">3</a></u>	January 27	<u><a href="#">Numbers 11-12</a></u>	<u><a href="#">The Complaint of Manna</a></u> / <u><a href="#">The Complaint of Miriam</a></u>
<u><a href="#">4</a></u>	February 3	<u><a href="#">Numbers 13-15</a></u>	<u><a href="#">The Complaint of the Spies</a></u> / <u><a href="#">Unintentional Sin</a></u>
<u><a href="#">5</a></u>	February 10	<u><a href="#">Numbers 16</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Korah's Rebellion</a></u>
<u><a href="#">6</a></u>	February 17	<u><a href="#">Numbers 17-19</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Aaron Chosen as Priest</a></u> / <u><a href="#">Laws of Consecration</a></u>
<u><a href="#">7</a></u>	February 24	<u><a href="#">Numbers 20</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Sin of Moses and Aaron</a></u> / <u><a href="#">The Edomite Refusal</a></u> <u><a href="#">The Death of Miriam and Aaron</a></u>
<u><a href="#">8</a></u>	March 3	<u><a href="#">Numbers 21</a></u>	<u><a href="#">The Fiery Serpent</a></u> / <u><a href="#">Israel's Sojourn</a></u>
<u><a href="#">9</a></u>	March 10	<u><a href="#">Numbers 22-24</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Balak</a></u> and <u><a href="#">Balaam</a></u>
<u><a href="#">10</a></u>	March 17	<u><a href="#">Numbers 25-26</a></u>	<u><a href="#">The Sins of Baal Peor</a></u> / <u><a href="#">Phinehas' Covenant of Peace</a></u> <u><a href="#">The Second Census</a></u>
<u><a href="#">11</a></u>	March 24	<u><a href="#">Numbers 27-30</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Amending Inheritances</a></u> / <u><a href="#">The Selection of Joshua</a></u> <u><a href="#">Sacrifices and Worship</a></u>
<u><a href="#">12</a></u>	March 31	<u><a href="#">Numbers 31-36</a></u>	<u><a href="#">War with Midian</a></u> / <u><a href="#">Rueben's Allotment</a></u> <u><a href="#">Restatement of Wandering &amp; Borders Of The Land</a></u> <u><a href="#">Cities of Refuge</a></u>



## CLASS 1 READING: NUMBERS 1-6

### **The Counting of Israel**

Jacob entered Egypt with 66 direct descendants. The children of Israel left Egypt numbering 600,000 men. This constant numbering reflects both the blessing of God to Abraham (the multiplication of his descendants) as well as the great logistical miracle God is performing in providing for the Israelites.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Why were the Levites not numbered in this census?
- 2) Which tribe was the largest?
- 3) According to Numbers 3:4, what happened to Aaron's oldest sons?
- 4) What change occurred in regards to the redemption of the firstborn in Numbers 3:45 (8:16)?

### **The Law of Jealousy**

One of the most interesting of the laws of Moses is in chapter 5 dealing with the jealousy of a husband. A husband who believed his wife was adulterous had to have this proven through an intricate offering and test. If she had been unfaithful, then the test brought a curse on the wife.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Why is this law important in protecting wives in Israel?

### **The Nazarite Vow**

One of the most intriguing vows of the law of Moses was the Nazarite vow. This vow could be taken by anyone in Israel, and lasted perhaps a year. In that time they abstained from anything that could even be considered unclean. At the end of the vow they would shave their heads and offer the hair as a sacrifice.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Why might the sacrifice of the Nazarite include unleavened bread? Who else was consecrated before God by the same offering (Ex. 29:1-2)?

### **The Levitical Blessing**

Numbers 6 concludes with the means of obtaining the blessing of God. Once the proper sacrifice was offered, the following blessing could be offered:

*The LORD bless you and keep you;*

*The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you;*

*The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.*

### **Numbers in the New Testament:**

The Nazarite Vow is intriguing because of its spiritual connection to the vow of being a Christian. Perhaps even some Christians took this vow (Acts 18:18, 21:24). A Nazarite was someone separated to God (the word *naziyr* means separated). A Christian is separated for God too (Rom. 1:1). They abstained from even the appearance of worldliness, as Christians are called to do (1 Pet. 2:11).

## **CLASS 2**

### **READING: NUMBERS 7-10**

#### **The Offering of the Tribes**

The leaders of Israel were called to bring gifts to God for the dedication of the tabernacle. They all offered the exact same gifts, perhaps to avoid anyone declaring that they had built the tabernacle. .

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Why might the sons of Korath have received no carts (Num. 4:31-32)?
- 2) How could Moses enter the Tabernacle and Holy Place (7:89) not being a priest?

#### **The Levites are Consecrated**

The consecration of the Levites for service to God begins with the lighting of the lampstands. After this the Levites will belong to God. Consecration and purification were major parts of the beginning of the service of the tabernacle and the worship of God. God calls the Levites a “gift” to the priests who would serve.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) What symbolism might be present in the Levites shaving their bodies (8:7)?
- 2) What was the age of beginning work and the age of retirement for a Levite?

#### **The Passover**

One year now has passed since the Israelites left Egypt. The first ceremonial Passover has come, and God instructs Moses to direct the observance of this day. What is interesting that is added here is the “make up” Passover for those who were not ceremonially pure to take it. They are permitted to take it one month later. It is interesting in particular because they are not told to observe it regardless of their impurity. This is an important lesson to us; it is better to wait to offer to God that to offer to God in error.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Could a Gentile observe the Passover? Was the law of the Passover different for them?

#### **Moving the Ark**

Numbers 9 describes the movement pattern of the Israelites. God manifested Himself (the Holy Spirit) through a cloud and fire above the tabernacle. When it moved, they were to follow it. Chapter 10 continues describing this movement with the commissioning of trumpets to sound the movement patterns and calls to worship.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Why did Moses want his father-in-law’s family to stay near them?

#### **Numbers in the New Testament:**

There is something of great importance in these chapters that we need to consider in regards to the worship of the church: consecration and purification. When we approach God in worship, we are entering a Temple not made with hands. To come to worship with impure hearts and minds is an abomination to the worship of God. This is apparent in Numbers, and is true for us today.

**CLASS 3**  
**READING: NUMBERS 11-12**

**The Complaint of Manna**

Numbers 11 contains two incidents in which the complaints of the people resulted in the wrath of God. The first complaint is not identified, but it might possibly be the same as the second, the complaint of manna. We first saw manna in Exodus 16. Now, a year or more into the journey and the complaint arises of the desire for something other than this bread from heaven. Numbers 11:4 suggests this complaint began with the “mixed multitude” (some translations call them “rabble”), possibly those who had come with them out of Egypt but were not of their number (Ex. 12:38).

This complaining seems too much for Moses to bear. He implores God to make this burden easier, and God does so by selecting the 70 elders to have the spirit of Moses passed among them. These men prophesy (only at that time) and speak the things of God. Once this has occurred, God causes a great wind to bring in quail from the sea. But as they were in the very act of eating this flesh, God struck the people with a plague.

**QUESTIONS**

- 1) What two ways is the wrath of God manifested in this chapter?
- 2) How would you describe Israel’s attitude to manna in 11:6?
- 3) Why would Joshua desire for the men outside the camp to cease prophesying?
- 4) Why is grumbling and complaining such an offense to God?

**The Complaint of Miriam**

Moses, Aaron and Miriam were all leaders of Israel sent by God (Mic. 6:4) and served as important prophets to the people for God. Yet they seem to have had their struggles, as seen here. It is unclear who the wife is that causes controversy. Some suppose it may have been Zipporah, although she is identified as a Midianite, not an Ethiopian/Cushite. Since Zipporah is not mentioned by name after Exodus 18, it is more likely that this is another wife (perhaps after Zipporah has died). What is important is that her heritage is likely the reason she is not accepted by Aaron and Miriam.

God intervenes without being summoned, and calls them all to the tabernacle, where He strikes Miriam with leprosy. Aaron and Moses both plead with God for intercession and mercy, and God demands her to be set apart for seven days. At the end of that time she returns and the camp moves.

**QUESTIONS**

- 1) Was Moses breaking the law if he married a Cushite?
- 2) Why did God intervene against Miriam when Moses did not ask?

**Numbers in the New Testament:**

The grumbling and complaining of Israel is a major theme in Numbers, and one brought to our attention in the New Testament (1 Cor. 10). We are repeatedly commanded not to grumble or complain, and yet most of us struggle with this issue (Php. 2:14, Jas. 5:9, 1 Pet. 4:9, Jude 16). Miriam’s complaint shows us even people of virtue and spiritual strength fall to that desire. We need to see too that God stands angry on behalf of His people. We can presume that for those who are righteous, He is angry with those who seek to find fault.

## CLASS 4

### READING: NUMBERS 13-15

#### **The Complaint of the Spies**

Twelve men (leaders/judges) were selected to spy out the land of Canaan. They were given orders by Moses to investigate the land and the people and to bring back produce from the land. They do so, spying all the way to Syria in the north. Returning they give a report to the people of all they saw.

It is important to remind ourselves that all twelve saw the same things. They all testify that the land is magnificent. So when ten of them report that the land was unconquerable, and two (Caleb and Joshua) see this as no problem for God, we should see that the issue not with the circumstances, but with the mind and heart of the interpretation.

The children of Israel thus reject the report that supported God's strength, and chose to accept the lie despite the inconsistencies of the story. Not only this, they decide to return to Egypt, and even seek to stone Caleb and Joshua for their encouraging message. It is in this volatile moment that God appears in the tabernacle.

God declares that the people *"have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice"*. If this ten times is literal, then it demonstrates that these people have been given great mercy and forgiveness by God, much more than the ten plagues on Egypt. But now God's greatest judgment is revealed: these will not enter into the land. The next five chapters span nearly 40 years of waste and loss.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Why might God have ordered spies into the land?
- 2) Was verse 32 a true statement? What may have motivated that statement?
- 3) Who would be allowed to enter the land? Why?
- 4) Why would the Israelites wander for 40 years?
- 5) What was the reaction of the children of Israel to this judgment?

#### **Unintentional Sin**

God now reveals in chapter 15 the pattern for sacrifices. Let us understand that these had to be offered at the prescribed altars with the priestly blessings (although there are some notable exceptions). After elaborating this a distinction is made between a sin committed in ignorance and a willful sin. The willful sin results in being cut off from God. The example of this is the Sabbath breaker found a few verses on in the chapter. Consider this willful sin in light of the term used in Hebrews 10:25-26.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Who in the Old Testament had problems because they did not follow the sacrifice pattern?
- 2) What did the blue cord on clothing represent?

#### **Numbers in the New Testament:**

The important point in this lesson, which is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 10, is that we choose what we believe. Thus faith is a matter or condition of the heart. The Hebrew writer cites this event as a proof that we can lose our salvation if we fall according to this example of disobedience (Heb. 4:1-10). This moment is perhaps the most heartbreaking in the Old Testament; an entire people saved and then lost.

## CLASS 5 READING: NUMBERS 16

### **Korah's Rebellion**

Korah was Moses' cousin (Ex. 6:18-21) and a Levite. He brought a group of 250 leaders (judges?) of Israel in defiance of Moses, declaring that Moses (and Aaron, vs. 11) had no right to lead them. Moses does not rebuke them, but instead prepares a test that will allow God to decide who is His choice to lead the assembly. Several of the leaders (Dotham and Abiram) refuse to participate in the test, accusing Moses of failing to live up to his promises.

The test Moses suggests is simple. They will each bring up a censer before God. Since this is a work of the priests, it is a challenge to see whom God accepts. Moses adds this caveat: if these men die in a manner that has never happened before, then the people should know that God has accepted Moses as the leader of Israel, and rejects Korah's bid for power.

As Moses finishes the challenge, the ground opens up, and Korah and his household were swallowed alive into the earth, along with all of their possessions. As well, fire comes out from the Lord on those with the censers, and consumes 250 men. God then orders that the censers that the men used, having been brought before the Lord, should be made into a covering for the altar.

Rather than settle the people, this event seems to stir them up to more unrest. They make the accusation that Moses and Aaron have killed God's people. This statement seems to anger God, who tells Moses that He intends to consume the entire congregation of Israel. A plague ensues; it is remarkable to consider how many plagues are brought on the Israelites in Numbers (six total; two in 11, one in 14, 16, 21, and 25).

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) What is the meaning of Korah's claim against Moses? What does Moses say they want?
- 2) Why would Dathan and Abiram not come to Moses?
- 3) Who died in the book of Leviticus coming before God with their incense offering?
- 4) Why would a unique death testify to God's choice in leaders?
- 5) Did Korah's children perish in the judgment (Num. 26:11)? Why might this be the case?
- 6) Are we less or more fearful of the anger of God in the New Covenant?
- 7) Regarding God's desire to destroy the Israelites, did God change His mind? What important act might Aaron's propitiation symbolize (vs48) that might help us to understand this moment?

### **Numbers in the New Testament:**

Jude declares in Jude 11 that those who are false Christians perish with Korah. Korah is exemplary of the Christian who, for the sake of preeminence or pride, rebels against the authority of God. Perhaps there is a particular reference to the one who rejects the authority of the church assembly (either the whole or the overseers). As Diotrephes refused John's authority, so also Korah rejected Moses. Rebellion is among the most hated sins by God, as evidenced in 1 Samuel 15. Moses told the people to move away from the camp of Korah and his supporters. We too are called to move away from those who reject the authority of God.

## CLASS 6

### READING: NUMBERS 17-19

#### **Aaron Chosen as Priest**

Korah's rebellion has lasting implications on the congregation of Israel. The challenge to Aaron's priesthood still stands in a fashion, despite the fact that Aaron has brought about a redemption of the people by his works. God seeks to demonstrate with another sign that Aaron is the one chosen to lead.

The test now is the rod of Aaron. We have seen in the past that the Rod of Moses was called the Rod of God (Ex. 4:20). Aaron's rod too has symbolism and power. These works were performed in Egypt, but none yet in the Wilderness. Now it has one final work to do: to determine in finality that Aaron is the choice of priest for God. Twelve rods are presented to the tabernacle, one for each leader of the tribe. Aaron's rod is presented too, as a thirteenth for Levi. The next day, Aaron's rod has budded, bloomed, and even has ripe almonds on it.

*Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree." Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word." Jeremiah 1:11-12*

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) What are some of the miracles in Egypt performed with Aaron's rod?
- 2) What significance is there to the almonds on the rod?
- 3) Does this have any relation to the BRANCH prophecies of Jesus?

#### **Laws of Consecration**

Aaron has been confirmed by the Lord and now must reaffirm what the reasons for his duties are. Leviticus was the charge of the acts of the priests, but here in Numbers 18-19 God speaks to the priests for the purpose of their actions. God declares that the priests must bear the iniquities of Israel. Not only that, but now it is declared that the Levites will have no inheritance of land.

However, God then declares that this special relationship is the gift of the Levites and the Priests. All of Israelite will provide for them (a tithe) to support them. God Himself will be their inheritance. The law continues into the next chapter describing the ways and means of their cleansing. A red heifer was to be slain outside the camp, and then offered as a burnt offering. The ashes of this sacrifice were then used to make a purification water for anyone who had been contaminated with a dead body.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) How does "bearing iniquity" and "having no inheritance" pertain to Christ?
- 2) Are there any other red heifer sacrifices mentioned in Scripture?

#### **Numbers in the New Testament:**

One of the important prophetic identities of Jesus is that of the BRANCH. There are seven BRANCH prophecies in the Old Testament that identify Jesus as the Chosen one of God. Just as the Branch of Aaron was given life after it was dead, so the BRANCH of Jesse was given life (Isa. 11:1). Perhaps even more significant is the implication of the priests bearing the iniquity of Israel. Jesus too as High Priest bears "the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). Some see the statement of Hebrews 13:11-13 as a reference to Jesus as the red heifer.



## CLASS 7

### READING: NUMBERS 20

#### **The Sin of Moses and Aaron**

The events of Numbers 20 seem to parallel the events in Exodus 17, but with a terribly different result. Once more the children of Israel lack water and protest this to Moses. God commands Moses to speak to the rock (different than before, when God commanded Moses to strike the rock). Water comes forth, but God then lays judgment to Moses and Aaron: they shall not enter the promised land.

There are a number of important lessons in this moment. Consider that this was a provocation against Moses as much as God. His sister has just died, and the people are provoking him to anger (Ps. 106:32). We see the importance of controlling our emotions. We see how God views disobedience.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) What is the significance that God changed the means by which Moses got water?
- 2) Why do you think water came from the rock even though Moses disobeyed?
- 3) What reasons can you think of for Moses' disobedience?
- 4) How did Moses demonstrate an absence of belief and a lack of reverence?

#### **The Edomite Refusal**

Edom is a natural path to the promised land. The Edomites are often referred to as the brother nation of Israel, as Jacob and Esau were brothers. They were protected by God, and God commanded the Israelites not to harass them (Deut. 2:5). Moses requested to the king of Edom permission to pass, and it is denied. Moses made a second request, offering to pay, but this too is denied.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) How did the Edomites (physical) meet the Israelites?

#### **The Death of Miriam and Aaron**

The chapter begins with the death of Miriam. No condemnation is made on her, so it is unclear why she was not permitted to enter the land. Her age may have been the chief issue. The chapter ends with the death of Aaron. God decrees that Aaron will not enter the land. Aaron's garments are passed on to Eleazar, and Aaron died on Mt. Hor (a later boundary marker for the nation). Although seemingly close in time to the rebellion, we are told in Numbers 33:38 that this was in fact the last year of wandering.

#### **Numbers in the New Testament:**

There is no better example of the implications of sin in the Old Testament than this one with Moses. All of the reasons that people seek to avoid the condemnation of God could be found here, and yet none saved Moses. Moses was a virtuous man (Num. 12:3), but other virtues do not erase sin. Moses still brought forth water (20:11), but results are not what matters. Moses did what God had told him before (Ex. 17:8), but doing things the old way is not acceptable. Moses broke what seems to be a very slight rule, and yet the penalty for this was equal to the rebellion of the Israelites. Moses was provoked by the Israelites and his own grief (Ps. 106:32), but we cannot blame others for our sins.

*"I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.' But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter.'" Deuteronomy 3:25-26*

## **CLASS 8**

### **READING: NUMBERS 21**

#### **The Fiery Serpent**

The chapter begins by letting us know that Israel is becoming the news of the region. This is an oft repeated story; nations hear about the sojourn of Israel, and will come out on multiple occasions to attack (or in the case of Gibeon, deceive). Multiple kings will come out against the Israelites. Some will be avoided, while others will be destroyed.

Once more the issue of the discouragement of Israel leads to complaint. Once more the complaint is based on food. This time, the plague is specified as fiery (oddly, this is the same word translated Seraphim in Isa. 6:2) serpents. The solution is unique: the creation of a serpent is put on a pole, and by looking at it people will be healed.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) What instigated the complaints of the people this time?
- 2) What is different about God's reaction to the people in this plague?
- 3) Is all that needed to be done was to look at the image?
- 4) What happens to this instrument later (2 Kings 18:4)?

#### **Israel's Sojourn**

The second half of chapter 21 is a record of the sojourn of Israel on the way to the Promised Land. These travels bring them into conflict with multiple kings and peoples. King Sihon of the Amorites challenged them and lost. The Amorites of Jazer were overcome. Finally, King Og of Bashan was defeated in battle.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) What detail is added about King Og in Deuteronomy 3:11?
- 2) In Judges 11:13-26 the King of Ammon attempts to re-write these events in what way?
- 3) How would you answer someone who asks why the Book of Wars is not in the Bible?
- 4) When did Israel dwell in the cities mentioned in verse 25?

#### **Numbers in the New Testament:**

The serpents that plagued Israel are mentioned several places in the New Testament. They are referenced in 1 Corinthians 10 as a warning to us about complaining. But the more important usage is in John 3 when Jesus was teaching Nicodemus about the nature of being born again. He stated that in order for men to be born again, He would need to be lifted up: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). Jesus elaborated on this later in John 12:32 saying "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." The Bronze Serpent is an allegory of Jesus. As it was constructed to be an image of that which was the problem, so Jesus put on flesh (Romans 8:3) and took on the image of that which causes us our fatal condition: the flesh.

## CLASS 9

### READING: NUMBERS 22-24

#### **Balak**

Numbers 22 introduces us to the King of the Moabites, Balak. It was prophesied in Exodus 15:15 that the actions of God for Israel would terrify the Moabites, and it has done just that. Balak decides that (having seen the defeat of the Amorites) directly attacking Israel is not the best action. Instead, he sends the princes of Moab to summon a prophet of Jehovah, Balaam, from Pethor, a city north of Damascus on the Euphrates River. The request is simple: Curse the Israelites.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Who is the ancestor(s) of the Moabites? Should they have feared Israel (Deut. 2:9)?
- 2) Why summon Balaam, as opposed to one of their own priests or prophets?
- 3) What famous Moabite is an ancestor of Jesus?

#### **Balaam**

Balaam is identified as a prophet of Jehovah, but he is also a sorcerer (24:1) and likely a polytheist. Interesting, a "Book of Balaam" which tells a story about this Balaam was found in the late 1960s inscribed on a wall in an ancient building in Jordan. Balaam declares that he cannot do anything that God has not permitted. That night God tells Balaam not to go with the men of Balak. A second time they come, and a second time Balaam refuses. Then God tells him that the third occasion of their request, he is to go with them, but only to say the words God gives him.

On the (long) journey to Moab, an unusual encounter occurs. An angel stands in the road, prepared to strike down Balaam. It is his donkey, whose tongue is loosed by God, who warns Balaam of this danger. Thus Balaam continues thoroughly warned by God to only say what God calls him to say.

When Balaam arrives, he is taken to the high places of Baal, and there offers a sacrifice to Jehovah. This is where it gets interesting. As Balaam begins to speak, he utters a blessing on Israel! Balak is angry, and takes them to yet another high place. Once more, sacrifices are made, and once more, Balaam blesses Israel. Finally, Balak moves them to another place, to Peor, and once again blesses Israel. At this, Balak orders Balaam to leave. But we are told in Numbers 24:14 that Balaam has some advice for Balak.....

#### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Why might God have told Balaam to refuse twice and then the third time to go?
- 2) Why would God threaten Balaam on the journey, yet authorize him to make it?
- 3) What do we make of Balaam offering sacrifices to God in the high places of Baal?
- 4) According to Revelation 2:14, what advice did Balaam give Balak?

#### **Numbers in the New Testament:**

Balaam and Balak are referenced several times in the New Testament. Peter warns against those who, like Balaam, speak for God for profit (2 Peter 2:15). Jude mentions the error of Balaam being those who run to error for reward (vs. 11), and John writes of Jesus; admonition in Revelation 2:14. There is a tremendously important lesson in Balaam. First, never pursue to do something for God for profit. Second, the next chapters teach us that while we need not fear others harming us (spiritually), we can lose it all if we are seduced to sin.

**CLASS 10**  
**READING: NUMBERS 25-26**

**The Sins of Baal Peor**

Peor is the name of the mountain that Balak took Balaam in order to curse Israel. It was a high place for Baal, who is identified as Baal-Peor. We are told that Balaam advised Balak to seduce Israel with the worship of Baal Peor. This worship included sexual immorality (Revelation 2:14) and to make and eat sacrifices to false gods and to the dead (Psalm 106:28). In many ways this is referenced as the ultimate rejection of God by Israel. God demands that Moses raise the people themselves to slay those caught up in this immorality.

**QUESTIONS**

- 1) What might it mean to offer sacrifices to the dead? What other forbidden practices referenced the dead (Lev. 19:28, Deut. 18:11)?
- 2) Why might God command Moses to have the judges act rather than to act directly as He had done in the past?

**Phinehas' Covenant of Peace**

In the midst of this carnal carnival, a Simeonite named Zimri brought out Cozbi, the daughter of a Midianite chief, and parades her before the congregation. Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, moved with zeal and killed them both. This brought the plague (which killed 24,000) to an end. This act was commended by God in a unique way. God establishes a covenant of peace and everlasting priesthood with Phinehas and his descendants. This is one of the seven covenants of the Bible, and is of great importance in the identity of Jesus, High Priest of Peace (Mal. 2:4-6, 3:1).

**QUESTIONS**

- 1) Phinehas violently killed two people. Why is his covenant called one of peace?
- 2) How would you describe Phinehas' zeal?
- 3) What does God order Israel to do in regards to the work of Midian?
- 4) Who of the Israelites had family in Midian?

**The Second Census**

A second census is ordered for the children of Israel, roughly 40 years after the first. We see some changes in size; a dramatic drop in Simeon, and a dramatic rise in Manasseh. Per the promises made before, none of these Israelites (except Caleb and Joshua) are over 60.

**QUESTIONS**

- 1) How was the land to be divided among the tribes?

**Numbers in the New Testament:**

We are warned of this event in 1 Corinthians 10:8. It is a warning that once we have been delivered by God, we can lose everything by returning to sin. This is important. The sins of Baal Peor would stain Israel for many years to come (Josh. 22:17). The temptation to commit sexual immorality is profound; repeatedly in the New Testament we are warned of those who would tempt us with doctrines that permit such immorality (Rev. 2:14, 2:20).

## CLASS 11 READING: NUMBERS 27-30

### **Amending Inheritances**

Even though Israel is preparing for war, there is an interesting side event that takes place. The daughters of Zelophehad, a Manassehite, have come to Moses requesting an inheritance in the land. As daughters they have no ability to obtain the inheritance of their father. This important request is received, and a new law is issued by God: if a man has no sons, his daughters would receive his inheritance. This law of probate ensures that none are left destitute or forgotten.

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Why were inheritance and genealogy rules so important to Israel?

### **The Selection of Joshua**

As a battle is being established, God tells Moses that his time has come. He will ascend Mt. Abarim (which Mt. Nebo is the peak), view the land, and be gathered to his people. Moses then petitions that a man would be appointed to replace him. God selects Joshua son of Nun, and Moses inaugurates him before the priests and people.

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) What was Joshua's name originally? What is Joshua's name in Greek?

### **Sacrifices and Worship**

One more time in Numbers we return to the laws of sacrifice and worship. It may be that these things need to be restated, as such a large number were entangled in the worship of Baal Peor. In this case, we are seeing the daily sacrifices that would be offered constantly. When reading of the multiple sacrifices an image emerges of a system of sacrifice in which there is constantly blood and animals coming to the tabernacle.

As well, the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread feast is once more addressed (the second time in Numbers, the fourth of five times in the Law of Moses). In this case it is discussed in the circumstances of the daily sacrifices. As well, the Feast of Weeks/Harvest and then the Feast of Trumpets/Booths.

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Was the Sabbath a memorial of? What was the Passover a memorial of?
- 2) What do these three feasts: Passover/Unleavened Bread, The Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths have in common in regards to the people and their worship?

### **Vows**

A last section pertains to vows. Keeping vows was a serious thing, but it was acknowledged that sometimes a vow needed to be revoked, Here some circumstances and remedies are discussed for those situations.

### **Numbers in the New Testament:**

The Hebrew writer describes Joshua as a figure of Christ in Hebrews 4. There we see that as Joshua led the children of Israel into the Land, so our Joshua leads us into the Promise of the rest of God. Understanding the principles of worship are reflected later in Hebrews 10; we too have obligations.

**CLASS 12**  
**READING: NUMBERS 31-36**

**War With Midian**

The events at Baal Peor must be answered. One more great battle occurs here before entering the land; in a sense, this battle must happen to demonstrate the dangers of false worship and to cleanse Israel of this terrible stain. The warriors defeat Midian (without any casualties) and return with the women, children and loot of Midian. Moses demands that the women and male children be executed. Only the girls and chaste women would be permitted to live.

**QUESTIONS**

- 1) What is Balaam's fate?
- 2) Why execute the male children? How would you answer someone who claims this is immoral?
- 3) What is used (vs. 23) to purify the unclean things of Midian?

**Rueben's Allotment**

Camped along the eastern side of the Jordan, the tribes of Rueben and Gad (and later Manasseh) see great prosperity. They petition that they might be given an inheritance on that side of the Jordan. Moses at first criticizes this decision, but then agrees to a compromise by these leaders.

**QUESTIONS**

- 1) Why did Moses accuse the tribal leaders of Rueben and Gad of sin?
- 2) What requirement did Moses put on these tribes in order to accept their allotment?

**Restatement of Wandering And The Borders Of The Land**

Chapter 33 and 34 restate the pattern of wandering of Israel. Now that the wandering is coming to an end, it is important to see the causes for this wandering. As well, God describes the borders of the land of Israel. Finally, the "border commission" of what lands would go to which tribes is described.

**Cities of Refuge**

Of the cities given to the Levites, six of them would be cities of refuge. This important part of the Law of Moses, When a man killed someone (without malice), there was an obligation of the family of the victim to become a blood avenger. If the man fled to one of these cities, he could not be killed. However, he needed to remain in this city until the time of a new high priest came.

- 1) Why was the blood avenger required per verse 33?
- 2) What happens if it is found a man killed another with malice and forethought?
- 3) How often was the high priest changed? Is this the same in the New Testament (John 18:13)?

**Numbers in the New Testament:**

The Hebrew writer declares that the church is a City to which we have fled for refuge (Heb. 6:18, 12:22). The Hebrew writer also tells us that in Jesus Christ we have a High Priest who will not die (Heb. 8:1). The city of refuge is one of the strongest foreshadows of the sanctification and justification in Jesus Christ found in the Old Testament. The concepts of the guilt of sin as a blood stain is powerful; the place of refuge in the church that Jesus built is magnificent.