

# BOOK OF NUMBERS

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Lesson 1: Introduction to Numbers

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## Perspective on the Journey

- **What does a glorious God look like?**
- **How does He reckon His own glory?**
- **How do we give glory to God?**
- **How do we take glory from God?**
- **What does our own glorification look like?**
- **What is God's definition of glorious life?**

**What makes God a glorious God? How do we define God's glory?**

**His glory is not hidden.**

- It is revealed in His Creation.
- It is revealed in His workings with the nations
- It is revealed in His own people, as He works through their lives.

**He does not give His glory to another or tolerate rivals.**

**As a sovereign God, His glory demands acknowledgement.**

- He will be glorified by the praise of His people
- He will be glorified by putting down His enemies

**The world reckons its glory by numbers.**

**God reckons His glory by the praise of His people.**

# Perspective on the Journey

## How do we give glory to God?

- Romans 15:6 – praise and worship
- Matthew 5:16 – letting one's light shine, good works
- John 15:8 – bearing fruit
- John 17:4 – finishing the work
- 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 – glorify God with your body
- 1 Peter 4:14 – bear reproach

## How do we take glory from God?

- When we set up rivals to Him
- When we lift ourselves up instead of letting Him lift us up
- When we give His glory to others, by praise or blame
- When we fail to identify counterfeits and deceptions
- When we make Him prove His power over and over again
- When we are not satisfied with the provision or place He gives us

Major ways the children of Israel fell short of realizing God's glory in the journey & the same ways we are prone to fail in our own journey

## Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-12

- Do not lust after evil things
- Do not become idolaters
- Do not commit sexual immorality
- Do not tempt Christ (challenging Christ to prove His power)
- Do not complain

We don't always recognize the form some of these take in our lives.

# Perspective on the Journey

## What does our own glorification look like?

### Distant future:

- Eternal life (John 17:1-3)
- A resurrected and incorruptible body (1 Corinthians 15: 42-44)
- Inheritance (Romans 8:16-18)

If we only focus on the distant promises, we can easily lose a sense of God's presence and glory in this journey.

The knowledge of Him has to translate into an experience of Him in this life if we are going to remain faithful through the challenges of this journey.

To do this, God gives us little experiences – little tastes – of glorious living along the way.

## What is the world's definition of glorious living?

- Material wealth, power, luxury and excess.
- These things are physical and tangible.
- We achieve these by our own work, our own judgment and planning, and often at the expense of others.
- We gauge our success simply by counting the numbers.

## What is God's definition of glorious living?

- The experience of rest, peace, joy, well-being, wholeness and righteousness.
- These things are intangible and spiritual.
- They can only be achieved through a deepening relationship with God
- We get tastes of these when we are completely aligned with God and His vision, engaged with God in the mission, and looking to Him for help in times of need.

## Three levels of achievement in this journey:

Parable of the Sower (Matt 13)	Wilderness Experience	Level
<p><b>Seed that falls on stony ground – No root.</b> Springs up quickly but dies quickly in the heat of the sun when trials begin.</p>	<p><b>Those unrooted in their identity with God.</b> These came out of Egypt with faith, but had no heart for the journey. They stumbled immediately, and died early in the first challenges of the journey.</p>	Nominal relationship with God
<p><b>Seed that is choked by thorns - Rooted but bearing no fruit.</b> The cares of the world and deceitfulness of riches makes it fail to produce fruit.</p>	<p><b>Identify with God, but do not fulfill their purpose or receive reward.</b> These go through most of the journey, reach a certain level of understanding and experience, but fall short of entering the land. They focus on external things, worry about having basic needs met, get lured into unfaithfulness by cravings. These complain about not having any fruit in their lives.</p>	Intermediate relationship with God
<p><b>Seed that is rooted and fruitful in good earth.</b> Fruit is associated with good works and reward for carrying out God's purpose</p>	<p><b>Identify with God, fulfill their purpose, and go on to receive the reward.</b> These enter the land.</p>	Mature relationship with God

# What We Will Study

**An exegetical study of the verses.** Take a high level look at the issues in each case:

- What the characters are dealing with
- What behaviors are displayed
- What decisions are made
- What the consequences are

**Draw some parallels between Israel's physical walk and the Christian walk.**

- Physical relationship models translate into spiritual relationships
- We will walk through this chronologically
- Consider what lessons happen at different points on the journey
- Consider your own progress - where you are in the journey.
  - What challenges have you faced?
  - Where you have failed and why?
  - What level have you reached?
  - Have you lived in a way that gives glory to God, or takes glory away from Him?

**Look for pictures of Christ**

# Where We Are in the Big Picture

## Physical Journey

<b>Genesis</b>	Eden to Egypt
<b>Exodus</b>	Egypt to Wilderness of Sinai
<b>Leviticus</b>	Wilderness of Sinai – <i>no traveling, focus on learning Law</i>
<b>Numbers</b>	Wilderness of Sinai to the Plains of Moab, <i>includes passing through Wilderness of Paran, Wilderness of Zin and enemy territories</i>
<b>Deuteronomy</b>	Plains of Moab – <i>review of the Law</i>

## Spiritual Journey

Birth into slavery to sin

Redemption – salvation and early faith

Learning plateau – *learning how to have a relationship with God through Christ, learning doctrine*

Sanctification to Glorification – *putting the knowledge into action and growing through practice*

- A process of being lifted up
- A process of separation - learning what it means to be set apart

# The Accounting

## Accounting of people

- Census 1 of the children of Israel (Numbers 1)
- Census of the Levites and a counting of the firstborn (Numbers 3)
- Twelve spies sent to Canaan (Numbers 13)
- Census 2 of the children of Israel (Numbers 26)

## Accounting of material things

- Supplies offered by the leaders (Numbers 7)
- Tithing principles (Numbers 18)
- Offerings required for holy days (Numbers 28-29)
- Division of plunder (Numbers 31)

## Accounting of places

- The journey in review (Numbers 33)

## Accounting of failings

- Death by burning for complaining at Taberah (11:1)
- Death by quail for giving in to craving (11:34)
- Judgment of leprosy against Miriam (12:10)
- Death by plague for the spies (14:37)
- Death to the first generation for refusing to enter the land (14)
- Death by stoning for breaking the Sabbath (15:36)
- Death by going down into the Pit for rebelling against authority (16:31)
- Death by burning for offering profane fire (16:35)
- Death by plague for rebelling against authority (16:47-49)
- Death (natural) of Miriam & Aaron (20:1, 28)
- Death by fiery serpents for complaining (21)
- Death by hanging and sword and plague for harlotry (25:4, 14)
- Death by warfare of the enemy kings



# The Wilderness Journey

## Why does God bring His children to a wilderness?

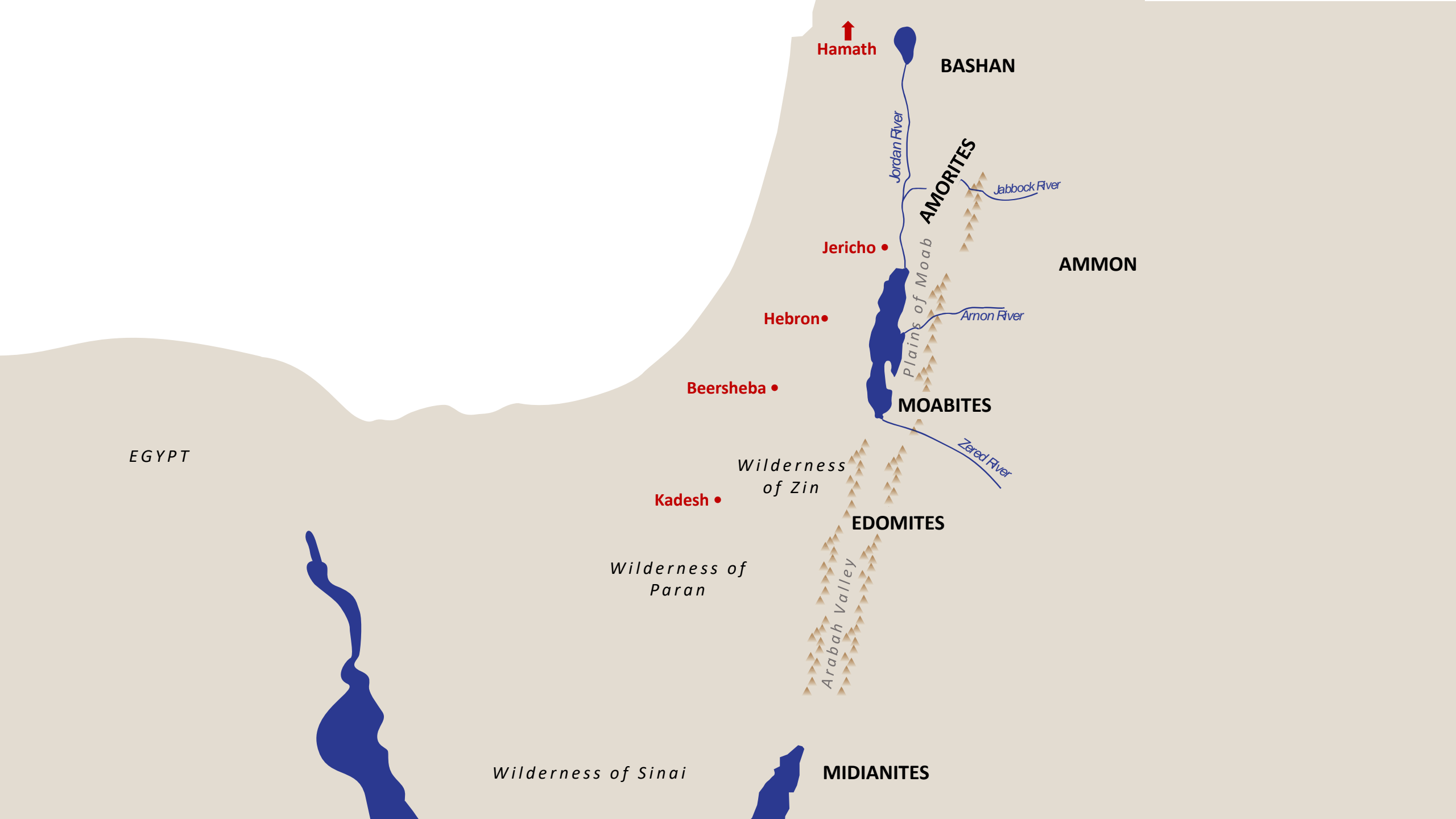
- **Creates a distinction between Egypt and the Promised Land** by creating a space of time where living conditions are in stark contrast to one another.
  - **Contrast Egypt to the wilderness** – slavery to freedom, Egypt with nominal perks into the barrenness of the wilderness
  - **Contrast the Wilderness to Promised Land** - Extreme barrenness in the wilderness is going to create a stark contrast to the extreme fruitfulness in the Land

## This journey into the wilderness was meant to be a form of Sabbath for us.

- Meant to teach us a complete reliance on God: God will feed, lead, teach, and protect His people.
- A time of rest from work to focus on developing a deeper relationship with God.
- To remove the distractions of the external to teach that life does not depend on external things but an internal relationship with God.

## **Goals of the Physical Journey (same as the Spiritual Journey)**

- To make a distinction between our past life and our future life.
- To give us rest between a time of slavery and the battles to come
- To teach us to rely on Him
- To teach us to focus on a relationship with Him apart from a lot of external noise
- To teach us what it means to be set apart as His people
- To test how well we have identified with Him and aligned our life with His vision and values
- To take the knowledge of a glorious God into the experience of a glorious God.
  
- For God to be glorified by His people through praise and worship
- For God to be glorified through His people as He works with us through this learning experience
- For God to lift us up as a glorious people and bring us into “the Land”
- To accomplish our sanctification and move us forward into glorification.



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**Hamath**

**BASHAN**

Jordan River

**AMORITES**

Jabbock River

**Jericho**

**AMMON**

**Hebron**

Amon River

Plains of Moab

**Beersheba**

**MOABITES**

Zered River

**EGYPT**

Wilderness of Zin

**Kadesh**

**EDOMITES**

Wilderness of Paran

Arabah Valley

Wilderness of Sinai

**MIDIANITES**

**Next Week: Overview of Chapters 1-10**