

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“Remember the Road”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Numbers 33; Num. 9:15–23; Ex. 14:11–14; Ex. 15:23–26; Ex. 16:2–15; Ex. 17:3–7; Deut. 8:2–10; Rom. 8:14–15; Prov. 3:5–8

Numbers 33 is the kind of passage we may be tempted to read quickly—or even skip. Much of Numbers, B'Midbar, meaning “In the Wilderness,” contains lists, names, locations, and details that initially seem insignificant. Yet the chapter begins, *“These are the journeys of Bnei-Yisrael when they came out of Egypt by their divisions under the hand of Moses and Aaron. Moses recorded the stages of their journeys at ADONAI’s command. These then are their journeys by stages”* (Num. 33:1–2). The name of the Torah portion is Masei, meaning “journeys.” It carries the idea of breaking camp, packing everything up, and setting out on the road once more. Numbers 33 records forty-two different stops along Israel’s journey from Egypt to the plains of Moab. This is more than a historical travel log. Every setting out and every stopping place happened at the mouth of ADONAI.

A Midrash compares this record to a father traveling with his sick son to a distant place to be healed. On the journey home, the father lovingly reminds his son of each stopping place: where they rested, where they suffered, and where they found relief. In the same way, Numbers 33 invites Israel to remember the road. Certain places carried entire stories. Rameses recalled deliverance from slavery. The Sea of Reeds recalled an impossible rescue. Marah recalled bitter waters made sweet. The wilderness of Sin recalled complaining, manna, and the gift of daily provision. Rephidim recalled thirst, quarreling, and water from the rock. The journey contained victories and failures, celebration and pain, but ADONAI was present through it all. There are also times when our Father invites us to pause, look back, and remember the road He has brought us through.

1. REMEMBER WHERE WE WENT WRONG

Is it really necessary to list all forty-two places? Could Israel not simply leave the past behind and concentrate on entering the Promised Land? It’s easy to understand remembering the exciting moments—Passover, deliverance from Egypt, and the dividing of the sea—but why revisit the complaining, fear, rebellion, and unbelief? Because remembering the consequences of sin can become a powerful teaching tool. Sometimes we want to forget our failures, but we must be careful to not erase them from the story. When we honestly examine our past, we begin to recognize our weaknesses, what provokes us, what intimidates us, and what repeatedly draws us away from trust in ADONAI. Pushing painful memories aside may feel easier, but it can also cause us to throw away an opportunity for growth.

The repeated failures in the wilderness reveal how naturally we trust ourselves. We trust our instincts, our reactions, and our understanding of what seems best. Yet Scripture warns, *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death”* (Prov. 14:12). When we look back and recognize that our natural reactions have repeatedly led us in the wrong direction, perhaps we will become less confident in ourselves and more dependent upon ADONAI. Leaving Egypt was more than a physical journey. Israel also had to be freed from the mindset, habits,

fears, and patterns of slavery. In the same way, when we committed our lives to Yeshua, He delivered us from slavery to sin, but He continues to use the stages of our journey to remove Egypt from us. The Father may bring us back to a painful stopping place, not to shame us, but to ask, “Do you remember what happened there? Do you remember what it cost? Let Me teach you so that you do not have to walk that road again.”

2. REMEMBER HOW HE REMAINED FAITHFUL

ADONAI does not call us to remember only what went wrong. He also wants us to rejoice in remembering what He has done. Forty years in the wilderness was not the original plan. Israel refused to trust ADONAI after hearing the report of the ten spies, and the result was a prolonged season in the desert. Yet even in judgment, ADONAI continued to show mercy. At the Red Sea, the people panicked and accused Moses of bringing them into the wilderness to die. Nevertheless, Moses declared, *“Don’t be afraid! Stand still, and see the salvation of ADONAI, which He will perform for you today. You have seen the Egyptians today, but you will never see them again, ever! ADONAI will fight for you, while you hold your peace”* (Ex. 14:13–14). They were afraid, but He opened the sea. They complained about hunger, but He gave manna. They quarreled because they were thirsty, but He brought water from the rock.

Israel was faithless over and over again, but ADONAI was faithful over and over again. He graciously gave them His instructions at Sinai. He led them, fed them, guided them, protected them, and sustained them in an uninhabitable wilderness. Deuteronomy reminds them, *“You are to remember all the way that ADONAI your God has led you these 40 years in the wilderness—in order to humble you, to test you, to know what was in your heart”* (Deut. 8:2). Their clothing did not wear out, their feet did not swell, and each morning there was bread on the ground. Remembering our failures can help us avoid repeating them, but remembering His faithfulness gives us courage to move forward. We can face the next Jericho because we remember the seas He has already opened. We can trust Him with tomorrow because we remember how faithfully He provided yesterday. Every stopping place testifies that His mercy was greater than our failure, His provision was greater than our need, and His faithfulness was greater than our inconsistency.

3. REMEMBER WHO MUST LEAD THE WAY

Many of the locations listed in Numbers 33 have little meaning to us today, but each name carried a memory for Israel. Perhaps the most important lesson shared by every stopping place was that each departure and each encampment was directed by ADONAI. *“At the mouth of ADONAI, Bnei-Yisrael would set out, and at the mouth of ADONAI they would encamp”* (Num. 9:18). Whether the cloud remained for two days, a month, or a year, the people stayed in place. When it lifted, they moved. The exact route is not the central point. Some of the locations can no longer even be identified with certainty. What matters is that there were forty-two clear moments when ADONAI directed them to stop or start, and Israel followed His leading.

Looking back at our failures and then remembering His faithfulness delivers a powerful message: when we insist on doing things our own way, we fail, but He never fails. Follow Him. We are children of God who have been filled with His Spirit. *“For all who are led by the Ruach Elohim, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall again into fear; rather, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”* (Rom. 8:14–15). He has not left us blind. He has given us His Word, revealed His character, and placed His Ruach

within us. Our emotions and circumstances never overrule His Word. Even when something feels right, if it contradicts what He has spoken, we must trust His Word above our feelings. Listen to the Spirit. Know His Word. Obey His instructions. When we set out at His Word and stop at His Word, there is life and freedom. When we insist on our own way, a journey that should have taken months can become a wilderness of many years.

CONCLUSION

As we look back over the road we have traveled, there are places we would gladly revisit and places we wish we could erase. And when we remember the road honestly, we discover something greater than the record of our failures: we remember how He remained faithful. The question is not simply, “Where have I been?” The more important question is, “Who will lead me from here?” Perhaps the Holy Spirit is bringing you back to a particular stopping place—not to leave you there, but to reveal what He wants to heal, what He wants you to surrender, and what He wants you to learn. If you know you have been going your own way, lay that area before Him. If you have been carrying shame from a place where you failed, receive His mercy. If you are facing a new stage of the journey and do not know which way to go, ask Him to make your path straight. Renew your commitment to set out at His Word and stop at His Word. *“Trust in ADONAI with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight”* (Prov. 3:5–6).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think ADONAI instructed Moses to record all forty-two stages of Israel’s wilderness journey?
2. What past mistake or painful “stopping place” might ADONAI want you to revisit—not in shame, but so that you can recognize what He wants to teach or heal?
3. How did ADONAI’s provision in the wilderness demonstrate His faithfulness even when Israel was complaining or disobedient?
4. Where are you currently tempted to trust your emotions, circumstances, instincts, or understanding more than the Word of ADONAI?
5. What would it practically look like for you to “set out at His Word and stop at His Word” during this present season of your life?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, we remember the road You have brought us through. We remember the places where we trusted ourselves and failed, and we confess that Your ways are higher and better than ours. Thank You for Your mercy, patience, provision, and faithfulness through every stage of our journey. Heal the bitter places, break the patterns we continue to repeat, and free us from the mindset of Egypt that still tries to follow us. Fill us afresh with Your Ruach. Teach us to recognize Your voice, understand Your Word, and respond with obedience. When You say move, give us courage to move. When You say remain, give us patience to remain. May we trust You with all our hearts and follow Your leading with every step of the road ahead.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen