

Numbers



Author: Moses



Date: Between 1446 - 1406 B.C.



Audience: God's chosen people,
the Israelites



Written in: Hebrew as
be-midbar

Introduction & Purpose of Numbers

The Hebrew title of Numbers translates to “*in the wilderness*,” highlighting the setting of the book and Israel's spiritual state. During their 40-year journey from Mt. Sinai to the Plains of Moab, the Israelites continually complaint and rebel, yet God shapes them being former slaves into a capable army. As an old generation fades, a new one, including two faithful spies Joshua and Caleb, prepare for the promised land. God also provided laws to ensure faithful worship in His presence.

About the Author

Moses was well-suited to author the Pentateuch due to his elite education in Egypt, time to write during Israel's desert journey, and commitment to God's mission. He is recognized as the chief prophet, leader of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, a miracle-worker, and the "lawgiver" of the Ten Commandments. His life spans three 40-year periods: living in Pharaoh's household (0-40), living as a fugitive in Midian (40-80), and leading the Israelites to the Promised Land (80-120). Moses died at 120 years old.

Structure & Themes of Numbers

The Book of Numbers has two main parts: *First Generation's Rebellion and Wilderness Judgment (Num. 1-25)*: Israel rebels against God during their journey, resulting in a 40-year condemnation in the wilderness. *Second Generation's Obedient Preparation and Hope (Num. 26-36)*: A new, obedient generation is prepared to enter the Promised Land under God's guidance.

Numbers highlights key themes:

God's Holy Presence and Providence: God dwells with Israel and leads them, revealing His holiness and rule.

Covenant Faithfulness and Obedience: Israel rebels and faces judgment, yet God forgives and remains faithful.

Wilderness Formation: God uses the wilderness to train people for inheritance, pressing the question: *will they believe God and step into His promises?*

Numbers helps us KNOW, LIVE, & LOVE like Jesus

Numbers invites us to **KNOW Jesus** as the faithful God who stays near us in the wilderness, where He guides, provides, and keeps His promises. The provisions the Israelites received points forward to Jesus being the true bread, living water, and the One who brings healing and salvation (John 6:35; 4:10; 7:37–39).

Numbers teaches us to **LIVE like Jesus** by trusting God no matter what. Israel's fear, grumbling, and sin derailed a generation of rescued people. Yet, Jesus models faithful obedience for us during His own wilderness testing (Matthew 4:1–11). Sin has dire consequences and can reap the judgement of God, but faithfulness cultivates blessings.

Numbers trains us to **LOVE like Jesus** through the hard work of community. When sin disrupts relationships, love looks like intercession and shared responsibility, carrying burdens and helping others find their place in God's family.

Notable Verses in Numbers

The Lord bless you
and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace. - Num 6:24-26

'The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.' - Num 14:18

In this wilderness your bodies will fall - every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.
- Num 14:29-30

Resources to Dive Deep into Numbers

- *Numbers Series* - The Bible Project
- *Numbers* – Jay Sklar (Story of God)
- *Journeying with God: A Commentary on the Book of Numbers* - Katharine Sakenfeld
- *Numbers: God's Presence in the Wilderness* – Iain Duguid
- *Numbers* - Gordon Wenham

Question to Ponder from Numbers

Will I trust God's presence and promises enough to follow His lead forward or will fear and grumbling pull me back into unbelief?