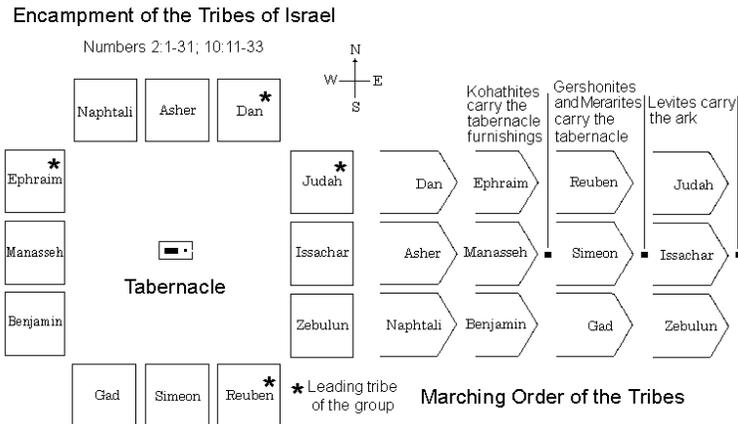


LESSON 7 - NUMBERS

After studying this lesson, you should know from memory a general outline for the Book of Numbers. You should also have a general knowledge about the events recorded in Numbers. Memorize well the chapter numbers for the key events listed, and learn well the memory verse. In class you will read some of the key portions of Numbers. At home you may want to read more of the book.

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS - GENERAL FACTS

The title for the Book of Numbers comes



from the "numbering" or census of Israel found in chapter 1 (at the beginning of their 40 year wandering) and chapter 26 (at the end of their 40 year wandering). The Jews called the book "bemidhbar," the first significant word in the Hebrew text. "Bemidhbar" means "in the wilderness." That name describes where the events in Numbers took place. The Israelites were wandering in the wilderness for 40 years after they left Egypt and before they entered Canaan. We could also call Numbers "the book of grumbling," because the book tells of the frequent grumbling and complaining of the Jews as

they wandered in the wilderness.

The theme of the book is "The March of God's Army Through the Wilderness." Numbers has 36 chapters. It covers a period of time of about 38 years, the years between the encampment at Mount Sinai and the encampment before entering the land of Canaan. Since this is one of the books of the Pentateuch, Moses is the human author of Numbers. The events that he records he knew from first-hand experience.

THE NUMBERS OF NUMBERS

Tribe	1 st Census	2 nd Census	Gain/Loss	Notes
Reuben	46,500	43,730	-2,770	
Simeon	59,300	22,200	-37,100	Gen 34:25, 49:5-7
Gad	45,650	40,500	-5,150	
Judah	74,600	76,500	+1,900	
Issachar	54,400	64,300	+9,900	
Zebulun	57,400	60,500	+3,100	
Ephraim	40,500	32,500	-8,000	Joseph's second son was Ephraim
Manasseh	32,200	52,700	+20,500	Joseph's firstborn son was Manasseh
Benjamin	35,400	45,600	+10,200	Next to Joseph, Benjamin was Jacob's favorite son

Dan	62,700	64,400	+1,700
Asher	41,500	53,400	+11,900
Naphtali	53,400	45,500	-8,000
Total	603,550	601,730	-1830

GENERAL OUTLINE OF NUMBERS:

1. Preparations for Leaving Sinai (1-10)
2. The Journey from Sinai to the Plains of Moab (10-21)
3. Events in the Plains of Moab (22-36)

(Notice that the first part of chapter 10 is included in Part 1, and the second part of the chapter is included in Part 2.)

THE FIRST MAIN PART: Preparations for Leaving Sinai (1-10)

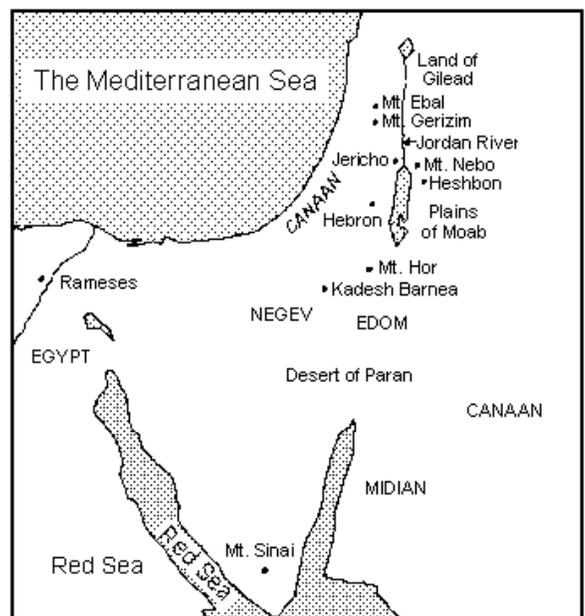
In chapter 1 we learn that Israel's army consisted of 603,550 men over 20 years old (v.45). The numbers from each tribe are given. The special service of the tribe of Levi is recorded in chapters 3 and 4. In chapters 5-10 we read about the following: purifying the camp of Israel of the unclean, the test for an unfaithful wife, the law of the Nazarite, offerings at the dedication of the tabernacle, and other preparations for leaving Mount Sinai. The Passover is again commanded in chapter 9.

(Be sure to look over these chapters in your Bible. If your Bible has headings summarizing the content that will help you see the flow of thought in the book.)

NAZARITE VOWS Any Israelite, male or female, could make a vow to dedicate themselves totally to serving God by taking a Nazarite vow. During the time that they were fulfilling their vow, such a person was called a "Nazarite". The vow could be for any amount of time, but during that time they could not eat or drink any product of the vine (grape juice, wine, grapes, raisins). The hair that grew during the period of dedicated service was shaved off at the completion of the time and was offered up to God along with a fellowship offering of grain. In addition a burnt offering, grain offering and drink offering were given. Read Numbers 6:1-21. A well known Nazarite was Samson (Judges 13:1-5, 24-25; Jdg 14-16). As with any Nazarite, Samson's long hair was to be a symbol of his dedication to the Lord's service. Perhaps the most famous Nazarite was the prophet Samuel. Samuel's mother Hannah made a vow that if God would give her a son, she would give him into a lifetime of service of the Lord and that a razor would never be used on his head (1 Sam 1:11). Paul participated in Nazarite vows even after becoming a Christian (Acts 18:18, Acts 21:20-24)

THE SECOND MAIN PART: The Journey from Sinai to the Plains of Moab (10-21)

This part actually begins at chapter 10:11 where we are told that the Israelites left the Desert of Sinai. In chapter 11 we read of the ungrateful complaining of the Israelites about the manna and their other "hardships." For punishment for the complaining, God sent a plague. Chapter 12 tells of Miriam and Aaron opposing Moses. Chapter 13 records the sending of 12 men to explore the land of Canaan from Kadesh Barnea. In chapter 14 the Israelites are complaining again and rebel. Chapters 15-21 tell of the following: special offerings, the death of one who broke the sabbath, the death of three men who rebelled, water from a rock a second time, the death of Aaron, and the episode of the bronze snake. In chapter 21 we are told that the Israelites reached the Plains of Moab.



THE THIRD MAIN PART: Events in the Plains of Moab (22-36)

These chapters contain such things as the following: The Balak and Balam incident, the idolatry of Israel recorded in chapter 25, the second numbering in chapter 26, the commissioning of Joshua to take over the leadership from Moses, laws, the giving of the land east of the Jordan River, the stages in Israel's journey, and instructions for taking and distributing the land of Canaan.

MEMORIZE THE CHAPTER NUMBER FOR THESE THINGS RECORDED IN NUMBERS:

the numbering of the people	chapter 1 and 26
12 spies sent to explore Canaan	13
the death of Aaron	20
the bronze snake episode	21

MEMORIZE THESE VERSES FROM NUMBERS:

(The Aaronic Blessing:) **"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."** (6:24-26)

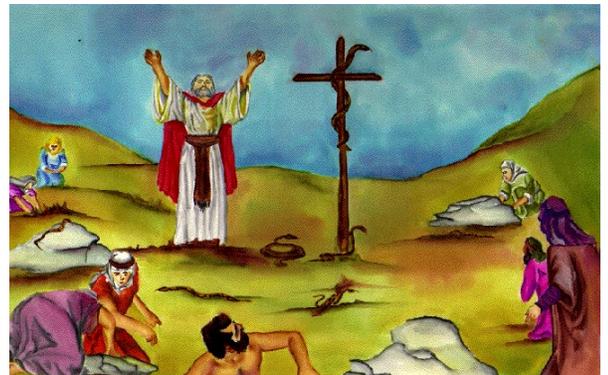
"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act? Do He promise and not fulfill?" (23:19)

"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. " (24:17)

THE BRONZE SNAKE AND JESUS

Read the episode of the Bronze Snake in Numbers 21:4-9 and answer the following questions:

1. The people were against God and God's appointed representative Moses.
2. As a punishment God sent _____.
3. When they bit the Israelites, the Israelites _____.
4. God commanded Moses to make a _____ and put it on a _____.
5. Anyone who was bitten by a snake could simply _____ at the bronze snake, and he would _____.



Now read John 3:14-16 and answer the following questions.

1. Jesus says that just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so _____.
2. By being "lifted up" Jesus was referring to _____.
□□□(See John 3:16, John 12:32-33)
3. Anyone who _____ in Jesus will not die eternally but have _____.

4. We could say that the complaining of the people in Numbers stands for the _____ of all people.
5. The death of the people who were bitten stands for the _____ that all people deserve because of their sins.
6. The bronze snake was a type of _____.
7. As the snake was lifted up, likewise Jesus was lifted up on _____.
8. Just as the people in Numbers were spared from death when they _____ at the bronze snake, likewise we have eternal life through _____ in Jesus.

Note: The sinful tendency of people to make idols out of any and everything can be seen by how the Israelites later made an idol out the bronze snake. In 2 Kings 18:4 it says, "Hezekiah removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.)"

AFTER REVIEWING THE LESSON, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. Write a theme for the Book of Numbers.
2. Read Hebrews 3:7-4:11. Answer the following questions:
 - Why were some of the Israelites not able to enter the Promised Land?
 - Why did the Word of God which they heard not benefit them?
 - What did God mean when He declared, "They shall never enter My rest."?
 - What should we do to make sure that we enter the "Sabbath-rest for the people of God"?
3. Write the three-part general outline for Numbers, giving also the chapters included in each part:
4. Why is the book called "Numbers?"
5. Why did the Jews call the book "bemidhbar" or "in the wilderness?"
6. In what two chapters is a numbering of the people of Israel given?
7. In what chapters can you read about these events:
 - 12 spies sent to explore Canaan _____
 - the death of Aaron _____
 - the bronze snake _____
8. In what book and chapter of the New Testament does Jesus speak about the bronze snake?

9 . Write from memory the "Aaronic blessing," found in Numbers 6:24-26.