

VI. Numbers [MSB, 195-96; SOTI, 263-5]

A. Introduction

1. Title

a. Hebrew title: "In the Wilderness"; "And He spoke"

b. LXX: "Numbers"

2. Date of Events: From 1445 B. C. (7:1; 9:15) to 1406 B. C. (Deut. 1:3)

The Chronology of Numbers [cf. **MSB, 111**]

2nd Year The Offering of Carts and Oxen at the Tabernacle (7:1-9)

1st Month The Cloud and Trumpets (9:15-10:10)

Chpts 1-12 The Offerings of Each Tribal Leader at the Tabernacle (7:10-89)
 The Arrangement of the Lamps and the Dedication of the Levites
 (8:1-26)

14 The Second Passover (9:1-8)

2nd Month The Numberings Begin and Further Laws Given (1:1-6:27)

14 The Passover for the Defiled (9:9-14)

¹ Notes prepared with help of The Master's Seminary BI 501 Bible Survey syllabus.

3 rd Month	20	The Departure from Sinai (10:11-32)
4 th Month		Journey from Sinai to Kadesh (10:33-12:16)
5 th Month	20	Spies Sent Out (13:1-20) Spying the Land (13:21-24)
6 th Month	1 st	Spies Return and the People Rebel against the Lord (13:25-14:38) The Futile Invasion Attempt (14:39-45)
7 th to 12 th Month		Death in the Wilderness (15:1-19:22)
3rd Year - 39th Year		** Interesting: <u>there is roughly a 36-37 year gap between Num 19:22 and 20:1</u>; of the wilderness wanderings
39th Year		
40th Year		
1 st Month		Miriam Dies (20:1)
2 nd Month		The Rebellion of Moses and Aaron at Meribah (20:2-13)
3 rd Month		Edom Denies Israel Passage (20:14-21)
4 th Month		Journey to Mount Hor (20:22)
5 th Month		Aaron Dies (20:23-28; 33:38)
6 th Month		Aaron Mourned (20:29)
7 th Month		Travel to and Victories in Transjordan (21:1-22:1)
8 th Month		Balaam (22:2-25:18)

spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the LORD heard it. ... ⁹ So the anger of the LORD burned against them and He departed. ¹⁰ But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam *was* leprous, as *white as snow*. As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, she *was* leprous.

(Chpt 14 is culmination of rebellion of the 1st generation against YHWH)

Numbers 14:1-2 Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. ² All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! ...

Numbers 16:1-4 Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *action*, ² and they rose up before Moses, together with some of the sons of Israel, 250 leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown. ³ They assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" ⁴ When Moses heard *this*, he fell on his face ...

Numbers 16:41-42 But on the next day all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You are the ones who have caused the death of the LORD'S people." ⁴² It came about, however, when the congregation had assembled against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tent of meeting, and behold, the cloud covered it and the glory of the LORD appeared.

Numbers 21:4-5 Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey. ⁵ The people spoke against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food."

- Complaining definition: fueled by an inaccurate, low view of God, and an inaccurate, inflated view of self, it is the act whereby the unthankful heart expresses dissatisfaction at circumstances, due to a deep greed and idolatry in his heart.
- Chpt 25:3 (very important and tragic passage) - we are introduced to a god we are going to see again and again in the OT: Baal-peor

Numbers 25:6-13 And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Midianite woman to his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, while they were weeping in the entrance of the tent of meeting. 7 When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose and left the congregation and took a spear in his hand 8 and went after the man of Israel into the chamber and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. Thus the plague on the people of Israel was stopped. 9 Nevertheless, those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand. 10 And the Lord said to Moses, 11 "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy. 12 Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him my covenant of peace, 13 and it shall be to him and to his descendants after him the covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel.' "

3. The Wrath of God toward His Disobedient People (11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25)

➤ *In response to complaining about food & craving meat back in Egypt:*

Num 12:20, 31-34 ²⁰ but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?" ' " ... ³¹ Now there went forth a wind from the LORD and it brought quail from the sea, and let *them* fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp and about two cubits

deep on the surface of the ground. ³² The people spent all day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers) and they spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp. ³³ While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very severe plague. ³⁴ So the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had been greedy.

- *In response to complaining about the spies & occupying the land God gave them:*

Num 14:20–23 So the LORD said, “I have pardoned *them* according to your word; ²¹ but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD. ²² “Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, ²³ shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it.

Num 32:11 None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully

Num 32:13 So the LORD’S anger burned against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the entire generation of those who had done evil in the sight of the LORD was destroyed.

- *In response to Korah’s complaint towards Moses:*

Num 16:31-35 ³¹ As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open; ³² and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with *their* possessions. ³³ So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. ³⁴ All Israel who *were* around them fled at their outcry, for they said, “The earth may swallow us up!” ³⁵ Fire also came forth from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.

➤ *In response to complaining about Korah's judgment:*

Num 16:46–49 ⁴⁶ ... wrath has gone forth from the LORD, the plague has begun!" ⁴⁷ Then Aaron took *it* as Moses had spoken, and ran into the midst of the assembly, for behold, the plague had begun among the people. So he put *on* the incense and made atonement for the people. ⁴⁸ He took his stand between the dead and the living, so that the plague was checked. ⁴⁹ But those who died by the plague were 14,700, besides those who died on account of Korah.

➤ *In response to complaining about food & water (chpt 21):*

Num 21:6 The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

- Even so, God did not abandon His people: "the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29)

4. The Blessing of God through Balaam (23-24)

- Several amazing proclamations; 23:9-10 → echoes of Abrahamic covenant
- 2nd oracle Num. 23:18 → "shout of a king is among them." V. 24 goes back to Ex. 24/Gen. 49
- 3rd oracle: Num. 24:9→Egypt (v. 8) anticipation of Israel's corporate victory when their King comes forth
- 4th 24:15 → anticipation dealing w/ the end of the days; v. 17 scepter from Israel; shall crush through Moab (king of Moab present to curse Israel) → Israel's fulfillment through this coming King
- These 4 prophecies affirm God's irrevocable commitment to bless the nation Israel (cf. Rom 11:29)

5. The Numbers: The Glory and Grace of Yahweh (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 14, 26)

- 1:46 → 603,550 men
- 2:32 → 603,550 'camps by their armies'

- 3:39 → 22,000
 - Counting women and children, population at any given time estimated to be 2 ½ million
 - 7:84-89 → numbering of the dedication from the leaders of Israel
 - Num 14, God refers back to chpt 1. Num. 14:28-29, now the census from chpt 1 becomes the obituary list
 - Num. 26:51 → the inheritance/army list
6. The Old and the New: the Patience of Yahweh (1-10; 26-36)
7. The Land (9:14; 10:9; 13-15; 16:14; 18:20; 20:12, 24; 26:53, 55; 32:7-9, 11; 33:50-56; 34-36)
- C. Purpose: The failure of Israel to obey Yahweh in faith brought Yahweh's discipline by death, but it did not frustrate Yahweh's ultimate purpose to bless Israel.
- D. Bibliography
1. Exegetical: Ashley, *The Book of Numbers* (NICOT).
 2. English Interpretation: Cole, *Numbers* (NAC)
Wenham, *Numbers* (TOTC).
 3. Expositional: Philip, *Numbers* (CC).