

Numbers an Introduction

Numbers 1:1

Author – Moses

Numbers 1:1 **The LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting,** on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

Numbers 33:2 **Moses wrote down** their starting places, stage by stage, by command of the LORD, and these are their stages according to their starting places.

2 Peter 1:21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, **but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

2 Timothy 3:16 **All Scripture is breathed out by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

Ephesians 6:17 and take the helmet of salvation, and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,**

Date 1440 -1400 B.C.

In the Wilderness

Wilderness (midbar): wilderness

A generation of unbelief and rebellion 1-25

A generation of faith and obedience 26-36

Part I: Preparations for the journey

1. Stand up and be counted! (1:1-54)
2. God's order of battle (2:1-34)
3. Saved to serve (3:1-4:49)
4. Outside the camp (5:1-31)
5. Consecration and blessing (6:1-27)
6. Gifts for God's altar (7:1-89)
7. Living lamps (8:1-9:14)
8. Guided by God (9:15-10:10)

Part II: From Sinai to Kadesh

9. Promise and compromise (10:11–12:16)

Part III: Kadesh—the four decade delay

10. So near and yet so far (13:1–14:45)
11. Reminders of God's goodness (15:1–41)
12. Showdown in the desert (16:1–40)
13. In wrath, remember mercy ... (16:41–17:13)
14. A gift of grace (18:1–32)
15. The water of cleansing (19:1–22)

Part IV: From Kadesh to the edge of Jordan

16. Turning-point (20:1–21:35)

Part V: On the threshold of the promised land

17. A curse sought and a blessing given (22:1–24:25)
18. Balaam's revenge (25:1–18)
19. A new day coming (26:1–27:23)
20. Spiritual worship (28:1–30:16)
21. Your sin will find you out! (31:1–32:42)
22. Preparing for victory (33:1–36:13)

Keddie, Gordon J. 1992. *According to Promise: The Message of the Book of Numbers*. Welwyn Commentary Series. Darlington, England: Evangelical Press.

Why preach through numbers?

Preaching from this text is relegated to the Balaam stories and oracles, the rebellious spy account, and an occasional reference to the Nazirite material to support a sermon on alcoholism.

Cole, R. Dennis. 2000. [*Numbers*](#). Vol. 3B. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

This is a different kind of story from the ones with which we are familiar. It is a story that doesn't really have a beginning. Grammatically it starts in mid-sentence, as it were, with a Hebrew narrative form that usually links back to the preceding verb. That is because the book of Numbers wants you to know that it never existed as an independent narrative: it is itself a continuation of the story of God's dealings with his people already begun in Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus.

Duguid, Iain M., and R. Kent Hughes. 2006. [Numbers: God's Presence in the Wilderness](#). Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

It is a story about Jesus

Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **everything written about me** in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

It is a story of God's faithfulness.

Exodus 6:8 I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.' "

Hebrews 6:13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself,

It is a warning about rebellion and disbelief

Hebrews 3:16–19 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

Numbers is story of already not yet

2 Corinthians 1:20 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

1 Peter 2:9–12 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹²Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Hebrews 6:17–20 So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, ¹⁸so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie,

we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹ We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.