

The Level of Decision

Chapter 4

Audio Lesson: Old Testament Survey lesson 18



Objective: to introduce the book of Numbers and to understand how the history of Israel in the wilderness can be an allegory that teaches us spiritual lessons for our lives.



I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. . . . Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

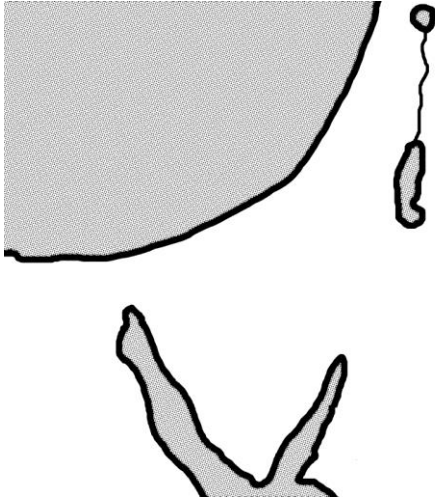
—1 Corinthians 10:1, 5-6

The book of Numbers continues a story line that began in Genesis, weaved its way through Exodus, and was briefly interrupted when God gave Moses a book of plans – the book of Leviticus - for building the tabernacle in the wilderness. When the people of Israel were miraculously delivered from their bondage in Egypt, they were to cross a wilderness and enter the Promised Land of Canaan. Numbers tells us that they did not go directly from Egypt into Canaan. Instead, they went around in circles in that wilderness for 40 years!

This piece of history allegorically tells us something about the relationship of many who call themselves believers of God. He forgave the children of Israel, but their sin still caused Him great pain. In the same way, there is more to our life in Christ than being forgiven. We were created, and recreated through our salvation, to glorify God by serving Him and entering into everything He has planned for us. Instead, many people often go around in circles of unbelief, disillusionment, and confusion. They are depressed, bored, dissatisfied, and unfulfilled. They have not entered the “Promised Land” of the abundant life promised in the New Testament. The promised land of Canaan is an allegorical picture of this New Testament quality of life the believer is saved to experience.

Numbers gets its name from two censuses of the Hebrew people recorded in the book.





Reminders Rules for How to Study Scripture:

- Come looking for God's Truth - John 17:17.
- Come willing to obey God's Word - John 7:17.
- Look for examples and warnings for our life.

Ask these questions as we study: What does it say? What does it mean? What does it mean to me? Or in other words, how do I apply this to my life?

The sum of all your words are true;... —Psalm 119:160

1. True or false? When the Israelites left Egypt, they went straight to the Promised Land.
2. True or false? The Promised Land is an illustration of abundant life.
3. True or false? God never tells anyone that it is “too late” to follow His calling.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. How does the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness relate to us today?
 - a. It is a good illustration of our life when we are filled with faith, peace, and obedience.
 - b. It is a good illustration of our life when we are filled with doubt, fear, and disobedience.
 - c. It means that we cannot have abundant life until after we have been Christians for a long time.
 - d. God wants everyone to spend a long time learning in the wilderness.
5. What kind of truth is in the book of Numbers?
 - a. Historical
 - b. Allegorical
 - c. Both
 - d. Neither

6. How many censuses are taken in the book of Numbers?
- None
 - One
 - Two
 - Ten
7. What happened between the censuses?
- The death of a generation
 - The death of Moses
 - Entry into the Promised Land
 - A battle with the Egyptians
8. Why did it take the Israelites 40 years to go on a journey that should have taken only 11 days?
- The Promised Land was occupied.
 - They sinned and did not trust God.
 - God led them around in circles.
 - All of the above
9. How do we enter into our “Promised Land”?
- We already did when we were saved.
 - By earning good points with our good works
 - By keeping all of God’s rituals
 - By believing God and committing to His plan for our life
10. Which of the following attributes should we have in order to experience God’s best gifts for our lives? (choose all that apply)
- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| a. Impatience | b. Faith |
| c. Complaining | d. Obedience |
| e. Timidity | f. Courage |
| g. Hope | h. Trust |
| i. Pride | |



Are you wandering in the wilderness or have you entered your Promised Land?
 What do you believe God wants you to do to enter your Promised Land?



Thank God for leading you out of captivity and slavery of sin through your salvation. Ask Him to lead you into His plan for your life, into your “Promised Land.”



Going Deeper

1. Describe the allegory that begins in the book of Exodus and continues in the book of Numbers. _____

2. What tragic event is at the heart of the book of Numbers? _____

3. What do a loving God and the death of an entire generation tell us about the character of God? _____

4. Describe how you as a believer apply to your own life the reality that a journey of 11 days took the children of Israel 40 years. _____

5. Describe spiritual datelines in your journey of faith that could be called “levels of decision” experiences. _____

6. Why were the people of God so very apprehensive about entering into the land of Canaan? _____

7. By application, are you entering into your “Land of Canaan” (authentic Christ-like living), or are you going around in circles? Explain. _____
