

BIBLE READING FOR 2023

WEEK #7 **NUMBERS 1-17** **02-12-23**

Monday - Numbers 1-3

Wednesday - Numbers 7-9

Friday - Numbers 14-17

Tuesday - Numbers 4-6

Thursday - Numbers 10-13

Numbers is the fourth book of the Old Testament and the Pentateuch. The name of the book comes from the two censuses or “numberings” of the people of Israel in chapters one and twenty-six. It also deals with events that took place during the forty years of dessert wandering they experienced after leaving Egypt.

The author is Moses and the book must have been written just before his death in the land of Moab. This would have been shortly before the Israelites began their conquest of the land of Canaan.

The purpose of the book was to call the Israelites to faithfulness. By reviewing what had happened to them since God had freed them from Egypt, Moses hoped to instill in them the confidence in God that they needed to successfully take possession of, and live in, the promised land. We today can also gain a similar benefit. If we will learn from how God dealt with Israel and work in fellowship with Him to do His will in our lives, we can overcome seemingly impossible challenges and reach our goals as well.

A major issue in this book relates to the numbering of the Israelites. The first census was taken thirteen months after the exodus. It included only the men of age twenty and above who were able to go to war. All of the tribes were counted except the tribe of Levi and the total number of men was 603,550. It is estimated that once all the men, women and children were considered, the total number of people could have easily been two or three million. Keep in mind, these are the descendants of that group of people that only numbered seventy when Jacob and his family entered Egypt about 440 years earlier. Just as God had promised, they had become a great nation. This also helps us understand why the Egyptians feared being overtaken by the Israelites while they were in captivity.

There are those who believe the Hebrew word for thousands could be translated clans or groups which would result in a much smaller and to them more believable number. But conservative scholars feel those efforts are unjustified and unnecessary. We must remember, after all, God was involved both providentially and miraculously in making all of this possible.

When the second census was taken about thirty-eight years later in chapter twenty-six, the number of fighting men was 601,730. It appears that the harsh dessert life and the punishment inflicted on them by God because of their unfaithfulness had taken its toll. However, they were still a mighty nation as they made preparations to enter the land of Canaan.

An outline of Numbers: 1.) Preparing to leave Sinai 1-9

2.) Journey from Sinai to Moab 10-21

3.) Preparing to enter Canaan 22-36

Questions for Numbers 1-17:

- 1.) Which tribe was not counted in the census taken in chapter one?
- 2.) What was over the tabernacle during the day and how did it appear in the night according to chapter nine?
- 3.) In chapter ten when did Israel set out on their journey from the wilderness of Sinai?
- 4.) Why were the people grumbling against Moses and Aaron in the beginning of chapter fourteen?
- 5.) How many of the Israelites died by the plague in chapter sixteen when they were being punished by God?

Answers to questions for Week #6 – Leviticus chapters 1-27:

- 1.) The grain offering.
- 2.) Two turtledoves or two young pigeons.
- 3.) Eleazar and Ithamar.
- 4.) The goat was sent away into the wilderness.
- 5.) God condemned anyone offering any of their children as human sacrifices to the pagan god Molech.